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ORGANIZED CRIME AND POLITICAL ECONOMY,
A Comparative Study.

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Degree of PhD.

University of Edinburgh

1986

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me alone and that it is my own original work.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Title of Thesis ORGANIZED CRIME AND POLITICAL ECONOMY:
A Comparative Study.

This thesis constitutes a theoretical study of the phenomenon of organized crime from a perspective different from the conventional view of the subject. It examines the problems of conceptions, classifications, and definitions inherent in this view and the reasons why they are both confusing and misleading. Our approach, which employs comparative and historical methods, involves an analysis of the matrix and development of organized crime and the axis on which it has revolved in each of the six societies we have investigated. This study views organized crime as assentially a phenomenon of capitalist societies. Rather than analysing it in a social void, the thesis attempts to examine the political and economic forces behind the existence and operations of organized crime in the societies: its connections with the established power structure to which it acts as servant and with whom it shares its profits in return for protection, and the operation of the political economy which brings organized crime operatives and their 'respectable' masters into a symbiotic relationship that enables both sides to pursue their common objective of profits and the wealth and power they bring.

As a protected phenomenon, this thesis argues that organized crime can thrive only in those societies in which it finds conditions conducive to its existence, and that the operations of capitalist economy and adversary politics in capitalist societies provide these conditions and serve to sustain its existence on a permanent and quid pro quo basis. This argument is buttressed by our findings in the examination of the state of organized crime in China and Cuba before and after their socialist revolution. In support of the assertion that the systematic organization of illegal activities organized for continuing profits, rather than individual illegal acts, is as characteristic of capitalism as bureaucracy is characteristic of the modern state, the argument (which can be extrapolated for other socialist societies) points to the absence of organized crime in these two societies after their socialist revolution, and which contrasts drastically with the situation during their pre-revolutionary, capitalist period, as well as with the current situations in Sicily, the United States, Canada, and Hong Kong. It argues that organized crime in capitalist societies cannot be eliminated as long as the alliance, collusion and symbiotic relationships between organized crime operatives and officials of the power structure continue to exist, and that its elimination in these societies will necessarily require a socialist transformation, as has been done in China and Cuba, of their political economy.

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This study has been carried on under very difficult and trying circumstances and its protracted period has tended to disrupt the happiness of my family, quite apart from its direct and indirect costs. It is difficult to see how it could have been continued, let alone brought to an eventual conclusion, without the type of an invaluable help my wife Anne has rendered to me. Throughout the course of this study, she showed not only a deep interest but also gave me a great deal of emotional, moral, and financial support. Her constant encouragement only reminds me of those immortal lines we learned in high school from William Wordsworth's Michael:

> There is a comfort in the strength of love;
> 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
> Would overset the brain, or break the heart...

To her I am deeply indebted for the completion of this study. It goes without saying that whatever weaknesses that still remain in this work are solely my responsibility.

CHAPTER 1: CONCEPTS OF ORGANIZED CRIME

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INTRODUCTION

Organized crime is a subject on which there has been more disagreement in its conception, classification and definition than with any other forms of crime. This is due partly to the nature of the phenomenon which is rarely subject to empirical observation, and partly to the interpretations writers give to the term 'organized' and what crimes they choose to include and exclude within it. As Block and Chambliss point out, 'organized crime always reflects the structure and tension in civil society, the opportunities for profit and power, and the contradictions in political economy'.[1] Most contemporary writers, as this study will indicate, have analyzed organized crime in terms of typology and criteria which can be used to distinguish it from other forms of criminality, and in terms of the activities of the criminals themselves without any reference to the powerful elements in society whose interests are served by organized crime, and have rarely made any reference to the type of society in which organized crime usually thrives.

This chapter examines the problems inherent in the classification of organized crime, the difficulty of arriving at a universally acceptable definition of the phenomenon, the unique problems associated with the study of organized crime,

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1. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, Organizing Crime, New York, 1981: 131.

and some contemporary perspectives on the structure of organized crime. In reconsidering the subject, the chapter points out why contemporary conceptions and definitions of organized crime are confusing and misleading. It views the structure of organized crime as a coalition of criminals and 'respectable' members of the ruling class whose interests are served by the former; it offers a working definition of organized crime and considers it as a phenomenon that is usually found in capitalist societies where its members are able to operate in the illicit sector of the capitalist system, and where they and legitimate capitalists pursue the same ends: profit, wealth, power and influence. The chapter also explores briefly varieties of capitalist societies, and draws attention to the difficulty of making distinctions on economic grounds between licit and illicit business enterprises. It sets out the plan for this comparative study.

PROBLEMS IN THE CONCEPTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF ORGANIZED CRIME

One of the persistent problems in the study of organized crime which has never been satisfactorily resolved, despite all that have been written in this area, is that connected with the conflicting myriads of its conceptions, classification and definition. Admittedly, these problems only serve to underline the nature of the phenomenon which, unlike conventional crimes such as robbery, theft, or burglary,[1] is a disparate form of criminality.[2] Whereas the latter is usually treated as a legal category, organized crime has no generally acceptable definition and is usually treated as a social problem by most contemporary social scientists. This situation has often opened the door to a variety of strange and varying definitions and concepts as to what organized crime is and is not. Because sociologists as well as law-makers have never been able to agree on what is meant by the term 'organized crime', efforts to define it so as to have it outlawed have never been able to surmount legal and constitutional hurdles.[3]. As one official highlighted

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1. M. McIntosh, The Organization of Crime, London, 1975: 10.

2. D.C.Gibbons, Society, Crime, and Criminal Careers, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968: 407.

3. For instance, on June 24, 1965, Senators John L. McClennan and Frank J. Lausche introduced in the U.S. Senate 'A Bill to Outlaw the Mafia and Other Organized Crime Syndicates'. The bill, however, fell of its own weight, for constitutional reasons. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 374 (November 1967): 108.

this problem before the McClellan committee in the United States, 'The hard-to-realize fact is that we have not legislated it to be a crime to engage in that activity which we have come to refer to as 'organized crime', and it follows that there are no meaningful sanctions to be imposed'.[1]

Organized crime should be distinguished from the efforts of the large number of individual operators: petty thieves, pickpockets, purse-snatchers, burglars, or stick-up men, and others of this type who try their hands at crime but without much effective accomplishment. There is apparently a recognition by organized criminals that while one may operate as one of the above, the big money is in none of these rackets.[2] They realize that one is not likely to achieve grand success from these criminal activities in the absence of 'organization'.[3] Certainly, the big money - and success to organized criminals is measured in terms of monetary reward - is to be made usually in enterprises which have a legitimate place in a competitive system but which can be perverted to criminal ends.[4] Crime organization may be loose and

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1. O.W. Wilson quote, Hearings Before the McClellan Comittee, 88th Congress, First Session, Washington, D.C., 1963: 493; O.W. Wilson, Police Administration, New York, 1950: 67-68.

2. Morris Ploscowe, 'Crime in a Competitive Society', The Annals of the American Academy, 217, 1941: 105-111.

3. M. McIntosh, op.cit.: 13-17.

4. M. Plowscowe, op. cit.: 110. See also Ernest D. MacDougall (ed.), Crime for Profit, Boston, 1933: Simon Rottenberg (ed.), The Economics of Crime and Punishment, Washington, D.C., 1973.

general, or informal: or it may be definite involving a system of specifically defined relationships with mutual obligation and privileges.[1] Organization usually introduces into the field of crime those factors of group discipline and obedience, cooperation and planning which make for efficiency here just as it does in the normal economic, political and social life.[2] It brings with it cooperation, specialization, and a form of social structure that gives personal status and a place where the individual belongs in the world of his associates. As well, organization helps to integrate and coordinate existing crime opportunities, practices, and personnel into a smoothly functioning, large- scale enterprise devoted to the assurance of a high level of profits for its members.[3] The criminal syndicate, in contrast to the criminal gang, is a relatively stable type of organization and usually represents an important, large-scale combination of capital and skilled personnel devoted to criminal activity.[4]

As we shall demonstrate in this study, political graft and police corruption are always necessary and intimately related to any effective organization of crime in any society.

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1. Alfred R. Lindesmith, 'Organized Crime', The Annals of the American Academy, 217, 1941: 119-127.

2. D.R. Taft and R.W. England Jr., Criminology, 4th ed., Ne w York, 1966: 183.

3. G.B. Vold, Theoretical Criminology, New York, 1967: 222; James G. March (ed.), Handbook of Organizations, Chicago, 1965.

4. ibid: 226.

Perhaps in no other area of lawless activity is the intimate association between crime and the general culture and officialdom better illustrated than in the phenomenon of organized crime.[1] Apart from political and police corruption and graft, businessmen and union leaders in some capitalist countries have often played a leading role in the phenomenon of organized crime,[2] as we shall demonstrate in the course of this study. It has been noted that organized criminals embody major cultural values in their activities and hardly differ at all from their fellow citizens with regards to the ends they pursue.[3] The gangster and the businessman, it has been pointed out, are both engaged in the single-minded pursuit of material success and they differ from each other mainly in terms of the services they provide and the techniques by which they ply their trade.[4]

The image of organized criminals conveyed by some writers and the news media, as Gibbons notes, is often one of evil malefactors in ever perpetual war with society and

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1. D.R. Taft and R.W. England, op cit. 182.

2. W.J. Chambliss, On the Take: From Petty Crooks to Presidents, Bloomington, Indiana, 1982: 84-6; A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, Organizing Crime, New York, 1981: 63-88; F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance, London 1976: 131-146; D. Bell, The End of Ideology, New York, 1967: 175-209; G. Servadio, Mafioso: A History of the Mafia from its Origins to the Present Day, New York, 1976.

3. D.C. Gibbons, op. cit.; Herbert A. Bloch and Gilbert Geis, Man, Crime and Society, New York, 1962: 220-21.

4. A.W. Linesmith, op.cit.

against whom the police are hopelessly powerless.[1] The symbiotic relationship between organized criminals and the established power structure, including the police, which makes the existence of organized crime possible is rarely given the necessary and extensive coverage it deserves before the public. Rather organized criminals are invariably portrayed, all by their own power, as being 'involved in extortion, violence, and other assorted crimes directed against an innocent public'.[2] This perspective hardly tells the whole story. Because of shared interests which exist between organized criminals and 'respectables' in capitalist countries, organized crime has traditionally involved collusion and collaboration between its operatives and the established power structure.[3] In fact, an examination of this close but hidden relationship would indicate that cooperation rather than conflict between the two has been commonplace, so that the notion of society at war with its internal enemies in the shape of gangster is more of a caricature than anything else.[4] Furthermore, the implication in popular

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1. D.C. Gibbons, op. cit.: 408.

2. ibid. For exponents of this perspective see, among others, A. Bequai, Organized Crime: The Fifth Estate, Lexington, Mass., 1979; D.R. Cressey, Theft of the Nation: The Structure and Operations of Organized Crime in America, New York, 1969.

3. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit. 88-96; J.L. Albini, The American Mafia: Genesis of a Legend, New York, 1979: 177-189.

4. D.C. Gibbons, op. cit.; R.K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, 1968: 127-136.

views that organized crime 'exists in spite of the wishes of the public rather than as a consequence of official collusion and citizen demands for illegal goods or services'[1] is admittedly misleading (emphasis supplied).

Rather organized crime exists to provide for the satisfaction of widely demanded, but legally prohibited, services or products. In the provision of these goods or services the cooperation of members of the established power structure is seen not merely an incidental characteristic of, but rather one of the critical elements for the survival and success of organized crime in any society. In order to adequately understand organized crime, it is imperative to view it as a dynamic interplay of structural-functional relationships between criminal associations and the general public, and should be analysed in terms of its structural-developmental, as well as historical differences.[2] Usually three basic groups of citizens are bound together in the complex that makes up organized crime: the criminal operatives who engage in organized crime, members of the legal power structure with whom they are in collusive cooperation and symbiotic accommodation, and the citizens who patronize the services or products of organized criminals. Thus, organized crime does not exist in isolation from other segments of society. As McCaghy argues, gangsters do not

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1. D.C. Gibbons, op. cit.
2. J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 22-23.

impose their wills upon society despite vigorous protestations and resistance.[1] If 'families' in organized crime have corrupters, as Cressey contends,[2] it is because there are individuals in society who are corruptible.[3] Indeed, as Chambliss has emphasized, to understand organized crime it is important to recognize that it is more than a collection of unsavoury elements. It is an alliance between government and criminals.[4] (emphasis supplied). We should also add that this alliance includes not only government but also businessmen some of whom very often utilize organized crime as servant to achieve their own ends.

Because organized crime is variously viewed by writers, this has resulted in conflicting arrays of conception of the phenomenon. As one police officer once put the problem during an inquiry, 'the presence or absence of organized crime here or anywhere else depends upon how you define it.'[5] Most writers and observers have viewed a variety of criminal groups as one and the same thing with variations

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1. Charles H. McCaghy, Deviant Behaviour: Crime, Conflict and Interest Groups, New York, 1976: 234.

2. D.R. Cressey, op. cit.: 248-89.

3. H.S. Ruth, Jr., Why Organized Crime Thrives, The Annals, 374, November 1967: 113-122.

4. W.J. Chambliss, 'Vice, Corruption, Bureaucracy, and Power', Wisconsin Law Review, volume 4, 1971: 1150-1173; Denis T. Lynch, Criminals and Politicians, New York, 1932.

5. J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 21.

in name only,[1] and they often fail to stress the symbiotic relationships between organized crime and the established legal authorities which allow it to thrive in capitalist societies. In the final analysis, organized crime is not some kind of an alien 'sickness' which afflicts an otherwise healthy social system. The way people view any phenomenon has always influenced their definition of it or classification of its components. This is equally true of the definition and classification of organized crime put forth by some writers.

Classifying Organized Crime

A review of the literature would indicate that organized crime has been classified and continues to be classified in a variety of ways which both include and exclude a variety of crimes according to the writer's conception of the phenomenon. We review here some of those works that have explicitly debated what organized crime is, and some of the criteria they have used in an effort to distinguish it from other forms of criminality. For Caldwell, organized crime involves, among other things, an associational nature, centralized authority, a fund of money, and a division of labour; and consists of three types: organized gang activity, racketeering, and syndicated crime.

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1. Milton R. Wessel, 'How we bagged the Mafia', Saturday Evening Post, July 16, 1960: 58-60. It should be noted that Wessel was discussing the American crime syndicates here, but he chose to use the popular term 'Mafia' which has ethnic connotation.

In his view, organized crime differs from professional crime which includes robbery, burglary, auto theft, fencing, purse snatching,[1] etc. On the other hand, Ruth Cavan views organized crime in terms of varying and increasing complexity of structure in which specialization, planning, protection from interference by the law, and a continuity of purpose and organization are the major characteristics. In her view, organized crime is of four types: theft by firearms, criminal syndicate operations, racketeering, and corruption.[2] While Cavan maintains that the organization of criminal gangs is quite different from the criminal syndicate,[3] Caldwell considers criminal syndicate as falling within the realm of organized criminal gang activity.[4] For Elliot, organized crime consists basically of professional criminals who form collusions or relationships in order to aid one another and increase efficiency of operation and protection thereof.[5] She divides organized crime into five types: thieving, fencing, gambling, swindling, and racketeering; and she considers as professional criminal: gamblers, prostitutes, kidnappers, swindlers, counterfieters, and narcotics

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1. Robert Caldwell, Criminology, New York, 1965: 133-58.
2. R.S. Cavan, Criminology, New York, 1962: 123-129.
3. ibid: 123.
4 R.G. Caldwell, op. cit.: 158.
5. Mabel A. Elliot, Crime in Modern Society, New York, 1952: 136.

traffickers. In this way, according to her classification, organized crime and professional crime appear to be one and the same thing. Barnes and Teeters consider syndicated crime to be one that is national in scope and uses strong arm methods to control vice or business.[2] They explain a criminal gang in terms of its activities which include kidnapping, bank robbery, and highjacking,[3] and then cite the Mafia or 'Black Hand' as an example of criminal gangs.[4] Interestingly, they bring in the Mafia and 'Black Hand' in their discussion of crime syndicate, thus making criminal gang and crime syndicate almost synonymous.

On the other hand, Johnson sees syndicated crime as "the perversion of the organizational scheme of legitimate business to provide illicit 'services, such as liquor, prostitution, gambling, or protection".[5] Although he maintains that no criminal group can be properly classified as professional, nevertheless he concedes that some groups are often regarded as such because of their skills and other capabilities.[6] His syndicated crime both includes and

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1. ibid: 133.

2. H.E. Barnes, and N.K. Teeters, New Horizon in Criminology, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1959: 24.

3. ibid: 51.

4. ibid.

5. E.H. Johnson, Crime, Correction and Society, Homewood, Illinois, 1968: 248.

6. ibid. 243.

excludes some of the enterprises that Elliot places under the category of organized and professional crime. For Sutherland who based his work on the information he received from a professional thief, rackets are seen as comprising such activities as pickpocketing, blackmail, shoplifting, and various forms of confidence games;[1] whereas for Caldwell, Cavan, and Barnes and Teeters racketeering belongsto the realm of force and intimidation, and Caldwell and Cavan view these three activities as falling within the realm of professional or mob criminality.

In viewing organized crime as synonymous with the underworld, Lindesmith believes that the latter's activity varies in degree of skill and organizational complexity, ranging from simpler forms of thieving to more complex swindling and finally to a more intricate format which includes illegal enterprises and various types of racketeering.[2] Elsewhere he argues that 'organized crime' refers to crime that involves the cooperation of several different persons or groups for its successful execution, and it is usually a professional crime.[3] For Taft and England, organized crime is basically of two kinds: predatory and

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1. The Professional Thief, by a Professional Thief, Annotated and interpreted by E.H. Sutherland, Chicago, 1965; see a similar study by Carl Clockars, The Professional Fence, New York, 1974.

2. Alfred R. Lindesmith, 'The Nature of Organized Crime' in C.B. Vedder, S. Koenig, and R.E. Clark (eds.) Criminology, New York, 1953: 376-77.

3. A.R. Lindesmith, 'Organized Crime', Annals, op. cit.: 119.

service-oriented, with the former consisting of extortion, pickpocketing, auto theft[1] which other writers classify as professional, criminal gang, or mob enterprises. The two writers include gambling in the service-oriented crime[2] and then view the latter as a form of racketeering which Caldwell and others view as falling primarily within the realm of extortion enterprises. While Thrasher saw the adolescent gang as central to the formation of criminal rackets, he emphasized that the gang is a phenomenon that is usually found in the immigrant or lower class area.[3] This latter position has been criticized by Bloch and Niederhoffer who point out that gang characteristics can be found among middle class adolescent groups as well as in middle class residential areas.[4] In the view of Sutherland and Cressey, organized crime consists of criminal groups whose size and structure is determined by the type of activity engaged in. For them, there are four kinds of criminal organization and all the members subscribe to the acceptance of an underworld code of mutual protection and hatred for the law.[5] In

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1. D.R. Taft and R.W. England, op. cit.: 184-95.

2. ibid.: 94.

3. F.M. Thrasher, The Gang: A Study 1,313 Gangs in Chicago, Chicago, 1963: ibidem, 'Gangs' Enclyclopedia of the Social Sciences, VI: 566.

4. H.A. Bloch and A. Niederhoffer, The Gang, New York, 1958: 7-8.

5. E.H. Sutherland and D.R. Cressey, Principles of Criminology, New York, 1974; see also D.R. Cressey, Theft of the Nation, op. cit.

their typology of organized crime, they include some and exclude other types which other writers consider to be within the context of criminal gangs, mobs, juvenile gangs, racketeers, organized predatory crime, and sydicated crime.[1] In his recent work Cressey depicts organized crime as a type of conspiratorial crime involving hierarchical coordination of a number of persons in the planning and execution of illegal acts aimed at subverting legitimate business.[2]

Similar to the view expressed by Sutherland and Cressey is that of Albini who reports that organized crime can best be described in terms of criminal groups which vary in size, composition of the functionaries and in the enterprises in which they engage[3] .... McIntosh, on the other hand, views organized crime in terms of professional crime which utilizes organization and professional methods, and she considers a variety of conventional crimes: theft, robbery, burglary, confidence trickery, as well as the operation of other types of crime, such as racketeering, as falling within the context

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1. Sutherland and Cressey, op. cit.

2. The Theft of the Nation, op. cit.; see also D.R. Cressey, 'The Functions and Structure of Criminal Syndicates', Appendix 'A'. Task Force Report: Organized Crime, Washington, D.C., 1967; Criminal Organization: Its Elementary Forms, London, 1972.

3. J.L. Albini, 'Mafia as a Method: A comparision between Great Britain and America regarding the existence and structure of types of organized crime', Paper to the 5th. National Conference on Teaching and research in Criminology, Cambridge, 1973.

of professional crime.[1] In their work, Mack and Kerner identifies organized crime with syndicated crime which are practised by two distinct sets of criminals,[2] and those engaged in syndicated crime tend to form a distinct group[3] and their activity is said to be primarily commercial in nature.[4] For Landesco who wrote during the turbulent years in Chicago, organized crime was seen as the manner in which the cooperative arrangements of 'good citizens', which are characterized as 'business enterprises' are mirrored in the environment of the gangster.[5] Pointing out the similarity between legitimate and illegitimate business, Sellin considers organized crime as being synonymous with economic enterprise organized for the purpose of conducting illegal activities and which, when in pursuit of legitimate ventures, uses illegal methods.[6]

Considering the range of crime most of the writers have classified as falling within the context of syndicated or organized crime: burglary, robbery, theft, pickpocketing, purse snatching, blackmail, shoplifting, swindling and similar types of crime, it is quite apparent that these varieties of crime are a universal phenomenon and are

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1. M. McIntosh, op. cit.

2. J.A. Mack with H. Kerner, The Crime Industry, Westmead, 1975: 6.

3. ibid: 38.

4. ibid: 33, 173.

5. J. Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, Chicago, 1968.

6. T. Sellin, 'Organized crime a business enterprise', The Annals, 347, 1963: 12-19.

hardly the type of crime organized criminals usually involve themselves in. Neither the Sicilian mafia, nor the American or Triad syndicates are known to engage in these kinds of crime ostensibly because they are not where the big money is normally made. These kinds of crime can be carried out in any country by individuals without police or political protection. When one examines the criteria employed: use of force, intimidation, violence or threat of it, the nature of collusions or relationships among crime operatives, how long the organization has been in operation, the skills and efficiency of the organization, the degree of complexity of structure of the groups involved, the degree of specializ-zation and planning, and the inclusion of some crimes by some writers and their exclusion by others, it becomes quite evident that these can hardly make for a consistent framework for the classification of organized crime because other forms of crime can be analysed in terms of these criteria as well. As Albini points to the futility and difficulty of this kind of exercise, 'these criteria in themselves are not mutually exclusive. Any effort to isolate organized crime on the basis of any one of these standards necessitates by its very nature the inclusion of a continuum of attributes both within the realm of behaviour as well as that of structure'.[1] More importantly, conspicuously missing in the discussion of organized crime by these authors is, Cavan being the exception,[2] the role of the established authorities and,

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1. J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 23.

2. Ruth Cavan, op. cit.: 127.

with the exception of Lindesmith,[1] the type of the social system in which organized crime usually thrives. The problem in the study of organized crime is not limited to its classification only but is also bound to confront anyone attempting to formulate a generally acceptable definition, or even a government seeking its legal definition.

Defining Organized Crime

Instead of looking for universal criteria with which organized crime can be identified for purposes of definition, a more fruitful exercise would endeavour to examine the phenomenon in terms of economic arrangement and political ethos of the societies in which it thrives. Efforts in the past to define and classify organized crime have not apparently yielded good results largely because they invariably tended to treat the subject in a vacuum without reference to the above variables. This approach was evident in the United States in the 1960s when the State of New York sponsored the Oyster Bay Conference to identify and define organized criminal activities in the State.[2] Listing what they considered to be its characterisitcs, the conference group viewed organized crime mainly in terms of its violence

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1. A.R. Lindesmith, 'Organized Crime', The Annals, op. cit: 120.

2. Combatting Organized Crime: A Report of the Oyster Bay New York Conference on Organized Crime, Office of the Governor's Counsel, Albany, New York, 1965: 19-24.

and described it as a totalitarian system[1] that 'seeks to subvert the established governmental apparatus by use of fear to maintain order within and outside its ranks', and its discipline is said to be almost paramilitary.[2] Apparently unable to come up with an acceptable definition, the conference group went on to describe the type of activities that they consider organized criminals usually engage in and viewed the phenomenon as 'a way of life in which members receive services which outsiders either do not receive or receive from legitimate sources'.[3]

After examining several terms and their political implications, the conference group settled for the term 'confederation' as the best one, in their view, for the characterization of organized crime in America. It should be noted that the conference did not extend its efforts to examine the role of political 'respectables' and other established authorities in organized crime in the country. It would appear that the majority of the conferees voted

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1. A totalitarian system, according to some writers, is said to have both political ideology and revolutionary objectives which apparently organized crime does not appear to have. For an overview on the system see, C.J. Friedrich and Z.K. Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, New York, 1966: 19.

2. Combatting Organized Crime, op. cit.

3. A Theory of Organized Crime Control: A Preliminary Statement, mimeographed paper prepared by the Technical Staff and Consultants of the New York Identification and Intelligence System (SIIS) May, 1966.

'confederation' out of political consideration but actually thought 'Mafia' or 'Cosa Nostra', as their final conclusion would indicate:

> All of these terms are generally applied to a single loosely-knit conspiracy, which is Italian-dominated, which operates on a nationwide basis, and represents the most sophisticated and powerful group in organized crime ....[1]

The definitional problem was further complicated two years later when the President Crime Commission framed its public discourse on organized crime in terms of a highly selective characterization and viewed organized crime as 'a society that seeks to operate outside the control of the American people and their government, involving thousands of criminals.... whose structure is as complex as those of large corporations, and whose actions are the result of intricate conspiracies aimed at gaining control over whole fields of activity.[2] The echoes of conspiracy in these efforts can be traced back to the early 1950s when the Kefauver committee[3] first viewed organized crime in terms of alien conspiracies,

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1. ibid. To fully understand the theme of conspiracy in America, see R.O. Curry and T.M. Brown (eds.), Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History, New York, 1972.

2. Task Force Report: Organized Crime, Washington, D.C., 1967: 1.

3. The Kefauver Committee: Special Committee to investigate organized crime in interstate commerce, 81st Congress, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, First Interim Report, 1950; Estes Kefauver, Crime in America, Garden City, New York, 1951: 12-16.

and the McClellan committee in the late 1950s echoed the same conclusion.[1] Thus it was these two committees which set the stage in the 1950s, and during the 1960s the search for organized crime and its definition in the U.S. was particularly focused on one ethnic group - Italian Americans - whose crime networks were most dominant during this period, after the pioneers in the field - the Poles, Germans, Irish and Jews etc. - had faded into respectable obscurity.[2] These efforts, however, were largely misdirected since they dealt mostly with the symptoms rather than the real 'disease' and its connection with the established power structure.

The alien conspiracy perspective which usually dominates the official thinking in the U.S. has traditionally viewed organized crime as something which was imported into the country by foreigners. [3] However, when the relationship of organized criminals and their masters in the dominant society, which we shall treat at the appropriate places in the study, is fully understood, it can be argued that organized crime is not some evil and monolithic presence standing

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1. McClellan Committee. U.S. Government, Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labour or Management Field, 85th. Congress, second session, Washington, D.C., 1957-59, Hearings, Parts 1-58.

2. A. Bequai, Organized Crime, op. cit.: 2.

3. And it was at times suggested during Congressional hearings on organized crime that one easy way to eradicate organized crime in the country would be the deportation of the 'aliens'; see Stanley Frank, 'The Rap Gangsters Fear Most', The Saturday Evening Post, August 9, 1958.

apart from a capitalist society and planning its destruction. Nor is it some alien conspiracy whose aims are counter to the logic and tenets of competitive capitalism. In fact, it is part of the social and political fabric of the nation in which it thrives. The General Accounting Office (GAO) in the U.S. in a review of that nation's efforts against organized crime, notes several times that there is no generally acceptable definition of organized crime and points out that the root of contemporary struggle against organized crime is hopelessly twisted because of the problem of meaning.[1]

It is clear that without a proper definition any government seeking to control or eradicate organized crime would have to face very difficult choices. It may resort to compiling an extensive list of small fry of enemies[2] while the big ones, their masters in 'respectable' positions remain largely untouched; it may frame its charges in terms of the activities carried on by organized criminals which are against the law - selling narcotics, smuggling, bookmaking, usury, murder, extortion,[3] and the like; or it may resort

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1. General Accounting Office, War on Organized Crime Faltering, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977: 2.

2. Robert F. Kennedy, The Enemy Within, New York, 1960. V.S. Navasky, Kennedy Justice, New York, 1971: 46. Such a list was compiled during the Kennedy Administration by Edward Silbering, Block and Chambliss, op. cit.: 196.

3. D.R. Cressey, 'Methodological Problems in the Study of Organized Crime as a Social Problem', The Annals of the American Academy, volume 374, 1967: 108.

to the all-embracing conspiracy statutes,[1] since 'the criminal law cannot effectively be used to attack organizations'.[2] The issue of meaning, in our view, is a critical one, and points to a problem of more than mere antecedent interest, for how one views any phenomenon naturally leads to ideological differences in defining how it may be controlled. This would be particularly so in the case of organized crime where Lippman warned many years ago that 'the underworld, because of the scale and character of its operation, is not comprehensible in the ordinary category of crime... and is impossible to abolish'.[3] Not only would the issues of meaning and definition go to the core of strategies for control[4] of organized crime, they also pose special methodological problems in the study of the phenomenon.

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1. This has been a particularly popular weapon in the U.S. where it has frequently been invoked against organized criminals, and often it was used to attack left-wing tendencies, draft dodgers and war resisters, as was the case in the trial of the Chicago Seven' in 1968. President Nixon found the conspiracy statute a good weapon against crime networks closely connected with his political foes; F. Pearce, op. cit.: 156; Gerald Csiscery, 'Nixon and the Mafia', Sundance, San Francisco, November-December 1972: 36-42, 68; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 157-163.

2. D.R. Cressey, Criminal Organization, London, 1972: 83.

3. Walter Lippman, 'The Underworld: Our Secret Servant', Forum volume 85, No. 1 (Jan. 1931): 1-9.

4. The Oyster Bay Conference noted the importance of this issue when it observed, 'A first necessity is that of developing a systematic and accurate definition of organized crime from which more effective enforcement activities might proceed. In the absence of a definition ... public understanding of organized crime would continue to be influenced by folklore and rumour: Combating Organized Crime,op. cit.: iv-v.

Unique Problems

In studying organized crime, one is inevitably confronted with certain unique methodological problems which one does not normally encounter in the study of other social problems. These problems stem mainly from the secrecy of the phenomen- on, the monopoly of data by one group of observers - the police -, and the absence of a generally acceptable defin- ition of the subject. These three factors taken together have often been largely responsible for some doubts that have at times been expressed about the existence of organized crime.[1] The main drawback in the study appears to stem from the fact that there are no 'hard data' on the subject.[2] Informants are usually not available for interviews, and there is usually no known way to observe the everyday interactions empirically of organized criminals with each other,[3] with other criminals, or with their masters in the superstructure which could help the observer learn

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1. For two contrasting views as to the existence of organized crime, see The New York Times, October 29, 1967: 31; J.L. Albini, The American Mafia, op. cit.: 1.

2. Even in the two cases, where researchers had carried out studies with criminals and acted as interpreters of what the criminals said and did, they had no independent sources from which they could verify the accuracy of the statements and claims made by the criminals; see E.H. Sutherland, The Professional Thief, op. cit.; C. Klockars, The Professional Fence, op. cit.

3. The only exception here appears to be the study by the Iannis of the Lupollo crime Family: F.A. Ianni with E. Reuss-Ianni, A Family Business, New York, 1972.

something about their norms, values, rules and modus operandi because such phenomena are socio-psychological in nature and, therefore, are readily observable only in the context of interaction.[1] Thus the stage from which organized criminals operate is always veiled in the cloak of secrecy. Participants in the drama are not accessible for observation by outsiders; they grant no interviews nor write memoirs or admit involvement, if indeed they can be identified.[2]

The public opinion or its attitude toward organized crime is often moulded in many respects by law enforcement personnel who invariably possess a monopoly on criminal data, a situation that tends to give them a pre-eminent positon in the development of policies and strategies to combat organized crime, usually based on how they think the underworld is structured and how it operates. The information that is collected by law enforcers on the subject is usually surrounded by secrecy and confidentiality[3] which preclude the material from being subjected to any critical and objective examination. Where access is permitted, it is normally to individuals, such as consultants to governments, who are known to share the perspective of law enforcers on the subject. Furthermore, informers are not easy to come by[4]

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1. D.R. Cressey, The Annals, op. cit.: 109.

2. Annelise G. Anderson, The Business of Organized Crime, Stanford, Ca., 1979: 147.

3. D.R. Cressey, op. cit.: 105.

4. Malachi L. Harney and J.C. Cross, The Informer in Law Enforcement, Springfield, Illinois, 1968.

and where a former member happens to turn a government witness, there is always the problem of reliability and validity of the information provided by the informer, for informers are usually known for their tendency to exaggerate.[1] To a student of organized crime these facts constitute a serious challenge to opening up the window to the world of organized criminals.

The extent of organized crime in any country in which it exists has always remained a matter of opinion, as it cannot be measured statistically. As the sole respository of data and information on criminal matters, law enforcement agencies have at times magnified incidents of organized crime in order to excite popular opinion and gain public acceptance of the extreme techniques which they employ in their investigations and arrests.[2] This gap in knowledge has often

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1. For instance, Valachi's story and testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee which most law enforcement officers hailed as a great breakthrough was found, upon thorough scrutiny, to be riddled with inconsistencies by Morris and others: see N. Morris and G. Hawkins, The Honest Politician's Guide to Crime Control, Chicago, 1970: 203-235; Peter Maas, The Valachi Papers, New York, 1969; J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 227-256; D.C. Smith, The Mafia Mystique, New York, 1975: 230-240; D. Bell, 'Myth of the Cosa Nostra', The New Leader: 46, Dec. 23, 1963.

2. In 1959, for example, in California, the Subcommittee Report on rackets declared that rackets definitely existed in the state in the form of 'Mafia'. But a special investigator, Alvin Goldstein, appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown, found no such evidence and stated that the existence of the Mafia was merely assumed, not proven. The Los Angeles Chief of Police retorted saying that Goldstein did not find evidence of the Mafia because his men had succeeded in keeping the organization under cover; Organized Crime in California. Report of the Subcommittee on Rackets of the Assembly of the State of California, Sacramento, 1959: 24.

been profitably exploited by law enforcers who have found in organized crime a strong and powerful card with which to lobby for increased annual resource allocations.[1] Since they alone possess all the 'facts and figures' on criminal activities, opposition to their demand is usually minimal, while any doubt as to the intensity of such activities is viewed by the police as 'heresy'. It should be noted that even Vincent Teresa, a well known former member of organized crime in America, indicated in his book that Valachi's story may have been tailored by law enforcement agents.[2]

Along with law enforcement agencies, journalists and the news media have always shown special delight in sensationalizing organized crime incidents and in bringing about the type of perspective the general public maintains on the subject.[3] Admittedly, crime stories are by their nature circulation builders: they create alarm, arouse apprehension and often stimulate calls for action. Although journalists and the media can be a powerful force in the fight against organized crime and those that collude with it,[4] yet it would be a mistake to view them as disinterested crusaders.

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1. D.C. Smith, The Mafia Mystique, New York, 1975.

2. V. Teresa with T.C. Renner, Vinnie Teresa's Mafia, Garden City, New York, 1975: 322; P. Maas, op. cit: 101-111.

3. Eugene Ruffini, Call it Mafia; 'The Police, the Press and the Legend', The Nation, November 22, 1971: 520-524.

4. Robert Allen (ed.), Our Fair City, New York, 1947: 12; Morton Mockridge and R.H. Prall, The Big Fix, New York, 1954: 130.

Steffens recalls how competition among newspapers in New York City generated a 'crime wave' whereby some newspapers resorted to taking run-of-the-mill burglar y stories off the police blotter and printing them in bold black headlines. The 'crime wave', however, suddenly disappeared when the police commissioner, Theodore Roosevelt, called off the competition.[1] Similarly, Feder and Joesten relate how a Rome journalist was convinced that the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics, 'fumbling in the dark', used to 'pop-off' about Luciano for want of a suitable headline-making name 'on which to hang its hat'.[2] Apparently the Rome journalist was not aware of the Bureau's obsession about the 'Mafia' - a sure-fire source of publicity.[3] Indeed, there is need to be critical about reports from the police, journalists and newsmedia on organized crime; a stringent caveat is certainly called for in the use of such reports in research. In our view, they should merely serve as a reference point to assist

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1. Lincoln Steffens, The Shame of the Cities, New York, 1948; see also Silas Bent, 'Newspapermen - Partners in Crime?', Scribner's. November 1930.

2. Sid Feder and Joachim Joesten, The Luciano Story, New York, 1954.

3. Traditionally, the U.S. Narcotics Bureau has used the purported existence of the 'Mafia' in the U.S. and its narcotics involvement to justify requests for increased funding when it and the FBI go before the Senate Appropriation Committee. Smith has dropped a caveat in this regard when he said, 'when the source of evidence for such an explanation is confined to one agency that has a stake in spreading its own point of view, the reliability of its evidence should be a matter of real concern'; D.C. Smith, op.cit.: 187.

one in critically analysing and reaching an independant opinion, and not as a reliable guide on which to base one's opinion. Perhaps even more troublesome and problematic, resulting from its secrecy and lack of personal observation of its operation, is the structure of organized crime which some writers, journalists and newsmedia have postulated, especially in North America.

Structure of Organized Crime

During the late 1960s a new picture of the structure of organized crime was espoused in North America by journalists, the newsmedia, and interpretative sociologists anxious to create 'new knowledge' by assuming similarities between the operation and management of legitimate and illicit businesses or enterprises.[1] The structure of organized crime that was postulated at this time was based on the events in America in the 1950s and 1960s: the Kefauver and McClellan committee hearings on organized crime,[2], the Valachi testimony before the U.S. Senate subcommittee,[3] and the President's Task Force on organized crime[4] which drew a bureaucratic

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1. See, for example, D.R. Cressey, 'Methodological Problems', The Annals, op. cit.: 110; Robert T. Anderson, 'From Mafia to Cosa Nostra', The American Journal of Sociology, 61, 1965; 71, 1966; R. Salerno and J.S. Tompkins, The Crime Confederation, New York, 1969.

2. The Kefauver Committee, op. cit.; The McClellan Committee, op. cit.

3. The Valachi testimony before The McClellan Committee, Hearings, 88th Congress, First Session, 1963.

4. The President's Task Force: Organized Crime, op. cit.

analogy between the workings of large legitimate corporations and that of organized crime. Essentially, organized crime structure was viewed as a formal organization deliberately designed like a business or government bureaucracy, operating on a nation-wide basis with integrated hierarchical positions for commissioners, councilors, bosses, underbosses, advisers, section chiefs, buffers, operators[1] and so on, just as one would find in a model corporate organization like the Bell Telephone System. This perspective which has gained wide credibility in North America has been sufficiently analysed and refuted by F.A. Ianni[2] and others that we do not intend to rehash the topic here.

However, while Ianni and others have pointed out that 'organization' of criminal syndicates cannot be described in the way Cressey and others have done without major distortions, their analysis is limited in that it deals with the structure of organized crime in terms of the relationship among the criminals themselves only. As our analysis in each of the countries we shall investigate in this comparative study would indicate, organized crime networks are not composed of criminals only but include the 'respectables' in the superstructure - politicians, businessmen, and law enforcement officers all of whom have shared interests in keeping

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1. D.R. Cressey, Theft of the Nation, op. cit.: 109-140; A. Bequai, Organized Crime, op. cit.: 19-20.

2. F.A. Ianni, A Family Business, op. cit.: 5-14, 107-110; 151-153; D. Bell, op. cit.; 139-141; J.L. Albini, op. cit. 221-257; D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 289-314.

organized crime thriving. It has also been claimed that organized criminals have a code or rules of conduct which govern their behaviour and that recruits submit to initiation rituals featuring blood oaths;[1] however, in neither the American syndicate nor the Sicilian mafia has anyone uncovered the existence of the code or observed the ritual ceremony.

Organized Crime Reconsidered

The conflicting perception and definitional problem inherent in the study of organized crime, as shown by the theories we have reviewed, appear to stem from the fact that these theories of the subject are essentially non-structural and ahistorical in their modes of analyses.[2] By restricting investigations and study of organized crime to the criminals only: gamblers, drug distributors, loansharks, etc., these theories divert attention from the important segments of crime network - a coalition of representatives of the leading centres of power in a capitalist society: bankers, business- men, politicians, and law enforcement officers. As we shall demonstrate in each society we shall investigate, these 'respectables' have as much interest in the rackets as

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1. D.R. Cressey, op.cit.: 186-215; G. Servadio, op. cit.: 27-28, 146; A. Bequai, op. cit.; 15-16; A. Blok, The Mafia of a Sicilian Village 1860-1960, New York, 1975: 51, 211-212.

2. S. Thernstrom, 'Yankee City' Revisted: The Perils of Historical Naivete', American Sociological Review, 30 April, 1965.

the organized criminals themselves, and they usually strive to maintain control of corruption and widespread criminality through a system of payoffs.[1] As well, these authors appear to analyse organized crime as an autonomous entity flourishing on its own, with no reference to its symbiotic relationship with these powerful masters in the superstructure whose cooperation and protection is essential for the continuing existence and growth of the phenomenon.[2] Nor do these analyses make any reference to the type of society. As our treatment of the subject would indicate, organized crime can best be understood within the context of its history and the political and economic forces that created it and which continue to sustain its existence in the society.[3]

As Smith notes, the characteristics that have been cited as keys to 'understanding' organized crime are

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1. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 61-80; 92; A Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 91-114; W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff (eds.) Whose Law, What Order?: A Conflict Approach to Criminology, New York, 1976: 162-182.

2. In several investigations carried out in American cities on organized crime, it was revealed that the real power behind organized criminals were 'respectable' members of the society: Estes Kefauver, Crime in America, op. cit.; J.A. Gardner, The Politics of Corruption: Organized Crime in an American City, New York, 1970; Robert S. Allen (ed.), Our Fair City, New York, 1947.

3. A. Toynbee, A Study of History, volume iv, London, 1935; Durant, Will, and Ariel, The Lesson of History, New York, 1968.

not the right keys. They often open doors that lead down dimly lit paths to cul-de-sacs, while the reality of organized crime continues down the main line, unimpeded.[1] As can be seen from the perspectives examined, the criminal conspiracy approach to defining organized crime[2] essentially would view organized crime as a popular concept to be communicated to the public and would naturally lead to a military analogue for systematic development of means to control conspiratorial movements.[3] But there are certainly other better and more meaningful approaches within which a definition of the subject might be cast, such as a social phenomenon to be analysed and understood[4] as part of the society in which it thrives; or as a specific set of acts or states of being which have been defined as illegal. These approaches, however, are basically interrelated and cannot

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1. D.C. Smith, 'The Problem of Definition' in F.A. Ianni and E. Reuss Ianni (eds.) The Crime City, New York, 1976: 60-68.

2. Combating Organized Crime, op. cit.: 19; President's Commission on Law Enforcement, Task Force Report: Organized Crime, op. cit.: 1.

3. R.O. Curry and T.M. Brown, op. cit.; A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.; D.C. Smith, op. cit.

4. D.R. Cressey, Theft of the Nation, op. cit.: 54-71. Although Cressey proposes that organized crime be studied as a social problem, his approach to the subject essentially violates the principle known as the Ocam's razor: entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem - entities ought not to be multiplied except out of necessity.

be considered apart from each other. Nevertheless, an adequate social definition, as Smith points out, ought to precede a legal definition if the latter is to have any enforcement value; and similarily, both the social and legal definitions ought to support the popular concept.[1] As the Oyster Bay Conference would demonstrate, this is not what has happened. Rather the popular notions[2] which are so burdened with stereotypes that it has been virtually impossible to undertake the necessary objective analysis that would produce an adequate social definition[3] have been adopted in the U.S. as the basis for efforts at legal definitions.

This is precisely the reason why some contemporary definitions of organized crime based on this premise are both confusing and misleading. The purpose of a definition is to provide limits within which to focus an enquiry. A good definition should be neither so narrow as to be trivial, nor so broad as to encompass more than is theoretically and empirically manageable. It is in this light that we suggest as a working definition that organized crime be difined as

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1. D.C. Smith, op. cit.

2. A number of social definitions of organized crime, all of which are hopelessly inadequate, have been proposed by Cressey. As would be expected, they are mostly based on the popular notion of equating organized crime with the Mafia: D,R. Cressey, op. cit.: 301-323.

3. In a seminar on organized crime in the U.S. students in a class were asked to list the first ten reponses evoked by the term 'organized crime' and the first ten common responses made by all the students in the order in which they occurred were: Mafia, money, Italian, Cosa Nostra, gambling, narcotics, prostitution, organization, corruption, murder:

D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 13.

that unique brand of crime that is usually associated with capitalist societies which involves the management and coordination of racketeering and vice in cooperation with the established power structure, following the pattern of management and practice of the political economy in these societies. Unlike the definitions that focus on the stereotypes and their characteristics, this one does not suggest who is involved, thereby leaving that question open for research. And it does not include such a wide range of criminal activities such as professional theft and corporate crimes that have much in common with the phenomenon. As a contrived concept, at least in contemporary usage,[1] organized crime does not possess its own logic, but would require, as our analyses will indicate, interpretations and insights from a variety of disciplines such as history, economics, sociology, political science, and even philosophy and theology that would facilitate efforts to understand why the phenomenon known as organized crime occurs, and what forces are behind its occurrence in capitalist societies.[2]

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1. There is a considerable difference between contemporary references to organized crime, especially in North America where it is burdened with the Mafia mystique and with which it is viewed as synonymous, and the conceptual approach intended by John Landesco in his original use of the phrase. See J. Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, Chicago, 1968.

2. These forces which occupy positons of power and influence in the government-business structure maintain links with and control over important segments of crime enterprises through symbiotic accommodation with the racketeers; see W.J. Chambliss, ON the Take, op. cit.: 81-113, 238-247; W.P. Morgan, Triad Societies in Hong Kong Hong Kong, 1982; F. Rome, The Tattooed Men, New York, 1975; J. Landesco, op. cit.; F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981.

By capitalist societies we mean of course those societies that practise the mode of production which was first advocated by Adam Smith around 1776.[1] Several authorities have offered definitions of capitalism. Charles A. Beard says that 'Capitalism is a system of production in which the primary object is the gain of profit through exchange'.[2] A. Shadwell defines capitalism as 'a particular mode of using material and financial capital characterized by private ownership, production for profit by means of hired labour so as to procure for the owner an income without work.[3] Professor Edwin R. Seligman views capitalism as 'that form of economic life which, resting on the desire to earn profits, places in the hands of a specific class the control of every stage in the process of production from

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1. Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations, Chicago, 1978. It should be noted that the ideology of classical capitalism which Smith advocated, recommended leaving economic decisions to the free play of self-regulating market forces. After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars had swept the remnants of feudalism into oblivion, Smith's policies were increasingly put into practice, and they apparently worked until the Great Depression of the 1930s brought Smith's policy of laissez-faire (noninterference by the state in economic matters) to an end and led to the Keynesian reappraisal. J.M. Keyes argued, among other things, that vigorous government intervention was required to maintain the economy at a high level of employment; see D.D. Dillard, The Economics of John Maynard Keynes, New York, 1948; R.F. Harrod, The Life of John Maynard Keyes, London, 1951; J.M. Keynes, The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money, London, 1964.

2. Yale Review, volume 18: 456-468.

3. Edinburgh Review, January, 1921: 80.

the supply of the raw material to the sale of the finished product on the market.[1] And many more of these definitions, all of which, while differing in details, are agreed on two things: that capitalism is directed for the profit-making purposes of capital, and that the means of production is largely privately owned.[2] The instruments of production of a society, in terms of the mode of ownership, can be privately owned and operated by individuals, families, and corporations; or publicly owned by the State and operated and controlled by its governing bureaucracy.[3] For our purpose, we view capitalism as an economic system under which production, distribution and finance are privately owned, operated and controlled by individuals or a minority who run them for private profit. Producers sell their products in open markets at competitive prices and not to government warehouses at prices set by the government. The presence of a relatively free market enables entrepreneurs to enter any kind of business they wish, and private businessmen make most of their own decisions based on the drive for profits and the consumer needs.

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1. E.R. Seligman, in Jerome Davis, Capitlism and Its Culture, New York, 1936: 19.

2. Oliver C. Cox, Capitalism as a System, New York, 1964; David M. Wright, Capitalism, New York, 1951; Paul M. Sweezy, The Theory of Capitalist Development, New York, 1949; Jerome Davis, Capitalism and its Culture, New York, 1936; Karl Marx, Capital volume Three, London, 1974.

3. Louise O. Kelso and M.J. Adler, The Capitalist Manifesto, New York, 1958: 94.

Capitalist societies, however, differ strikingly ranging from advanced industrialized countries of the West and Japan to most of the Third World countries still struggling to get industrialized. We may distinguish the following models of capitalism. The America-German model which is the most purely capitalist system based on laissez faire philosophy where businessmen operate as they please so long as they obey the many regulatory laws. The Anglo-French-Italian model: while most production is in private hands, the government owns and operates some key companies or industries; the Scandinavian system which could be called either welfare capitalism or free enterprise socialism; the Japanese system which is a mixture of capitalism and feudalism. Although the industry here is almost entirely in private hands, it is heavily cartelized and subject to government administrative guidance. On the other hand, the zaibatsu (big capitalists) so strongly influence these decisions and get so many favours - such as light taxes and easy credits from state-connected banks - that it is hard to tell where industry ends and government begins. And finally, the model that is found in most Third World countries where the production is mostly labour-intensive and governments own and operate some key industries as in the Anglo-French-Italian model.[1] The capitalist system may be contrasted with the collectivist or socialist system which is centrally planned and managed and in which the government owns the means of production and exercises control over economic decision-

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1. Time Magazine, July 14, 1975: 32-41.

making. Since individual producers must sell to the government warehouses at prices set by the government there is virtually no free and competitive market.[1]

Although there are differences among the capitalist economies in the growth of the public sector, this does not alter their basic similarity since both private and public demands are met chiefly by the output of private enterprises.[2] Whereas capitalism has been able to produce a rich supply of goods and services, it can build only a rich, not a just society.[3] Apologists of capitalism believe that one of its great benefits is free competition.[4] Adam Smith himself, who never used the term 'capitalism' but preferred the term 'natural order' for his system, assumed that this was the 'obvious and simple system of natural liberty'.[5]

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1. This system is in operation in the Soviet Union and most of other Communists countries; see P.M. Sweezy, Socialism, New York, 1949; H. Wellisz, The Economies of the Soviet Bloc: A Study of Decision Making and Resource Allocation, New York, 1964; F.D. Holzman (ed.), Readings on the Soviet Economy, Chicago, 1962.

2. The New Enclyclopaedia Britannica, 6, Chicago, 1979: 276.

3. Time, op. cit.

4. See, for example, M. Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, Chicago, 1974; J.A. Schumpeter, The Theory of Economic Development, Cambridge (Mass), 1934.

5. Adam Smith, op. cit. Book IV, Chapter 9.

The official organ of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce once declared that 'the best way to promote the improvement of a nation is to leave capital to find its lucrative course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment'.[1] These views which extoll the virtues of competition and the self-regulating market apparently overlooked the formation of combinations which, as Sweezy points out, have the conscious goal of controlling competition.[2]

There is an inherent tendency in capitalism to lead away from free competition among producers and toward the formation of monopolies resulting from the concentration of capital and centralization of control in a few hands.[3] Thus monopoly capital may be secured on the basis of a relatively high degree of centralization which, by reducing the number of competitors and enterprises in a given line of production, makes competition increasingly severe and perilous for the survivors.[4] This has often come about

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1. Nation's Business, August 1932.

2. P.M. Sweezy, The Theory of Capitalist Development, op. cit.: 262; Modern Capitalism: Its Nature and National Features, Novosti Press Agency, Moscow, 1962.

3. P.M. Sweezy, op. cit.: 254; E. Kefauver, In A Few Hands: Monopoly Power in America, New York, 1965.

4. P.M. Sweezy, op. cit.

via a large-scale merger[1] activity which, in Europe at least, has been mainly horizontal in character - that is, it involves the joining together of corporations to form new giants which dominated specific industries or sectors of the economy.[2] In effect, corporate capitalism, which is one of the stages in the development of monopoly capitalism, operates in most cases in such a way that the great majority of owners are completely divorced from management or control of their capital in favour of a small minority of owners who act as managers and administrators of others' money.[3] For example, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company is said to control more wealth than is contained within the borders of twenty-one states of the Union.[4] Since the Great Depression, however, governments of capitalist societies have realized that the self-regulating market, as advocated by classical economists, would not always tend to a state of

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1. Whereas the accumulation of capital by some big entrepreneurs has often helped them to take over other small businesses or corporations, the same accumulation of capital by organized criminals has often enabled them to enter the legitimate economy; D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 332.

2. Keith Cowling, Monopoly Capitalism, Warwick, 1982: 71; see also S. Aaronovitch and M. Sawyer, Big Business: Theoretical and Empirical Aspects of Concentration and Mergers in the U.K., London, 1975.

3. J. Davis, op. cit.: 63-64; Modern Captialism: op. cit.

4. ibid.

full-employment equilibrium,[1] and they have come to accept, at least in principle, the responsibility for maintaining a reasonable level of employment through a variety of fiscal and monetary policies. All of these policies have this in common, however, that they differ radically from Soviet-type central planning which tends to guarantee full employment.[2]

For our purposes, what is important is not the debate over corporate and monopoly capitalism but rather the application of control and monopoly in the legitimate sector to stifle competition by a few entrepreneurs and corporations in order to control the market. The same technique has been adopted by organized criminals to control the illicit sector of the market.[3] As Vold points out, the situation is strikingly similar in the case of the underworld 'combination' or 'syndicate'. This same element of control is precisely what these forms of organization bring to the system of underworld business enterprises. Since the profits from these activities are enormous, there will inevitably be competitors trying to 'muscle in' on the lush take.[4]

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1. J.M. Keynes, op. cit.

2. A.R. Oxenfeldt and V. Holubnychy, Economic Systems in Action, New York, 1965; Gennadi Khromushin, Lenin on Modern Capitalism, Moscow, N.D.

3. Gus tyler, 'The Roots of Organized Crime', Crime and Delinquency, volume 8, (October 1962): 833-834; Herbert Bloch, The Juvenile Gang: A Cultural Reflex, The Annals, volume 347 (May 1963): 25; F. Rome op. cit.: 221-222.

4. G.B. Vold, op. cit.: 235. See also K. Allsop, The Bootleggers, London, 1961, for the account of the bloody St. Valentine's Day massacre for the control of liquor business in Chicago during the Prohibition period; D. Arlacchi, 'The Mafia and Capitalism', New Left Review, 118, 1979: 65; Modern Capitalism, its Nature, op. cit.

Problem of Distinction: Licit and Illicit Businesses

As social structures, the underworld of crime and the upperworld of business and politics are in many ways essentially two sides of the same coin. The nature and character of the underworld in any given society is a reflection of the kind of business integrity and political morality that is characteristic of the dominant elements of the community.[1] There is a paradoxical relationship between legal and illegal business enterprises in capitalist countries. The paradox is that the seeds of the illegal business that is so pervasive in these societies are usually sown in the nature of business enterprises that are legal.[2] As this study will indicate, the so-called 'tolerance' that dominant society is said to extend to organized crime often stems from this relationship. As Vold has emphasized, 'organized crime should be thought of as a natural growth, or as a developmental adjunct to our general system of private profit economy. Business, industry, and finance all are competitive enterprises within the area of legal operations. But there is also an area of genuine economic demand for things and services not permitted under our legal and social codes. Organized crime is the system of business operating in this area. It, too, is competitive, and hence must organize for its self-protection and for control of the market'.[3] Thus there is an interrelation between the

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1. G.B. Vold, op. cit.: 237.
2. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit: 135.
3. G.B. Vold, op. cit.: 240.

underworld and the upperworld.

All this raises the question of distinction that is often drawn in capitalist societies between legitimate and illegitimate, or licit and illicit enterprises. It has been pointed out that, except on moral grounds, in strictly economic terms there is no relevant difference between the provision of licit and of illicit goods and services.[1] Illicit enterprise, as Smith makes clear, is the extension of legitimate market activities into areas normally proscribed - that is, beyond existing limits of the law - for the pursuit of profit and in response to latent illicit demand.[2] As the liquor traffick in the U.S. before, during, and after Prohibition would illustrate, the provision of liquor in that country during the Prohibition period constituted no less an economic service dispensed in a market than either before Prohibition was introduced or after it was abolished. Nor can it be held that in European countries, with registered and legalized prostitution, the prostitute contributes an economic service, wheras in countries like the U.S. and Canada, lacking legal sanction, the prostitute provides no such service. The same argument can be made of gambling. As Merton notes, 'the failure to recognize that these

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1. E.R. Hawkins and W. Waller, 'Critical Notes on the Cost of Crime', Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 1936, volume 26: 679-694; see also R.K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, 1968: 133.

2. D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 335.

businesses are only morally and not economically distinguishable from 'legitimate' business has led to badly scrambled analysis,[1] (Emphasis in original). Thus business activities can be depicted as falling on a continuum of behaviour ranging from the very saintly to the most sinful.[2] However, conventional descriptions of organized crime appear to operate from a different assumption by holding that activities such as gambling, loansharking, and union racketeering are distictive in character from 'legitimate' business and operate according to different cultural values.[3] It should be emphasized that the line separating the upperworld and the underworld is indeed a thin one,[4] and that there is only one world, in fact, in which illicit enterprises, which have clear and often accepted roles in society, are linked to the licit enterprises by functional similarities and by practices that evidence only the subtlest of distinctions. Indeed, the only meaningful distinction that can be made between what is called

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1. R.K. Merton, op. cit.: 134.

2. L.T. Wilkins, Social Deviance: Social Policy, Action and Research, Englewood, New York, 1965: 46-47.

3. D.C. Smith, op. cit.

4. This thin line between what is proper behaviour and what is frowned upon in the interrelations of private and public morality, and which appears to be one of the vulnerable chinks in the armour of public morality in capitalist societies today, has been subjected to book-length discussion and analysis; see E.S. Atiyah, The Thin Line, New York, 1952.

'legitimate' business and what is called 'illegitimate' business is that the former supposedly operates within the law while the latter operates outside the law. Both, however, are in some degree concerned with the provision of goods and services for which there is an economic demand.

Organized crime thrives in capitalist societies because its goal and that of capitalism is the same - the pursuit of profit which brings wealth, power and influence to its possessor. Certain characteristics that form the hallmark of capitalist economy and its success: individualism, private property, materialism, profit motive, consumer sovereignty, freedom of competition and contract, occupational freedom, and limited role of government, are also conducive to the growth and success of organized crime.[1] It has been said that the model of capitalism that stresses more individualism and non-interference by government, that is, the laissez faire model, is most conducive to the growth of organized crime.[2] During this phase of capitalism which lasted up to the Great Depression, the capitalist barons of the period employed ruthless methods and engaged in most reprehensible

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1. J. Davis, Capitalism and its Culture, op. cit.: 30-39; G. Tyler, 'The Roots of Organized Crime', Crime and Delinquency, volume 8, October 1962: 325-338; D.R. Taft and R.W. England, op. cit.: 23-31; C.B. MacPherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Lock, London, 1962.

2. A.R. Lindesmith, 'Organized Crime', Annals, op. cit.

trade and practices in their pursuit of capital.[1] They blazed the trail that organized criminals would follow later on in their own pursuit of the same capital.[2] As Bell appropriately points out,... 'the foundation of many a distinguished older American fortune was laid by sharp practices and morally reprehensible methods... They ignored, circumvented, or stretched the law when it stood in their way. This has not prevented them and their descendants from feeling proper moral outrage when latercomers pursued equally ruthless tactics'.[3]

Crime organizations are not political parties that could publish manifestoes or position papers advocating a particular brand of capitalism. Nevertheless, their activities appear to indicate a preference for a market-regulating economy which is riven with intense horizontal

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1. For the literature of the period and the nature of activities carried on, see, among others, J.T. Adams, Our Business Civilization, London, 1929; A.M. Schlesinger, Paths to the Present, New York, 1949; J.T. Adams, 'Our Lawless Heritage' Atlantic Monthly, December 1928; Max Lerner, America as a Civilization, London, 1958; H.D. Lloyd, Wealth against Commonwealth, New York, 1894; Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, Chapel Hill, N. Carolina, 1944; D.E. Owen, British Opium Policy in China and India, New Haven, Con., 1934.

2. H.D. Lloyd, op. cit.: 512-513; A.M. Schlesinger, op. cit.: 15; F. Rome, op. cit.: 152.

3. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, New York, 1967: 148; Matthew Josephson, The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists: 1861-1901, New York, 1962; Milton Mankoff in Introduction to Perspectivess on the Problem of Crime, in W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff, op. cit.: 187; D.S. Strong, 'New England: the Refined Yankee in Organized Crime', The Annals: 347, May 1963.

conflicts between individuals and groups and in which the resulting competition would place them in the role of a mediator and powerbroker.[1] Such a role enables them to apply some form of control that would act as a firm deterrent to the unfettered spread of the conflicts, hostilities and feuds that would otherwise ensue from the anarchic competition of the self-regulating market.[2] As a tool of the bourgeoisie and the established power structure, members of organized crime have traditionally been used to fight any encroachment of socialism, real or imagined, upon the capitalist system, to keep workers in their place, and to cheat them of their fair wages.[3] Because organized crime needs capitalism with least government interference to operate, it has traditionally remained an enemy of left-wing politicians, socialists, and trade unions whose philosophy favours socialism and massive government intervention in the economy.[4] Its members have tended to support individual

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1. P. Arlacchi, op. cit.: 65; H. Hess, Mafia and Mafioso: The Stucture of Power, Westmead, 1973: 33-39, 120-150; D. Bell, op. cit.: 186-187.

2. M. Pantaleone, The Mafia and Politics, London, 1966: 34-40; D. Bell, op. cit.: 181-189; P. Arlacchi, op. cit.; H. Hess, op. cit.: 139.

3. N. Lewis, The Honoured Society: The Mafia Conspiracy Observed, London, 1964: 150-153, 161-163; F. Rome, op. cit.: 70, 132, 144; F. Pearce, op. cit.: 131-145; A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 87; H. Hess, op. cit.: 6, 141-142; G. Servandio, op. cit.: 36.

4. F. Rome, op. cit.: 60-64, 190; G. Servadio, op. cit.: 36.

politicians or political party, that would protect them in the course of their business enterprises, through political 'contribution' and fraudulent voting practices.[1] It is a mutual or symbiotic arrangement that works to the advantage of both parties, and helps to ensure the survival of organized crime in the capitalist economy.

For the plan of this comparative study. In order to demonstrate that organized crime is a phenomenon that usually flourishes in capitalist societies because its philosophy and that of capitalism is underpinned by the same motive - the pursuit of profit and the wealth, power and influence it brings - and because organized crime is system operating in the illegitimate sector of capitalism, we shall attempt to explore the dimension of organized criminal activities in four capitalist societies. In order to test our argument, we intend to investigate two other societies that are currently socialist but were formerly capitalist, with respect to the existence of organized crime in those countries both in their capitalist and socialist phases of history.

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1. Mark H. Haller, 'Organized Crime in Urban Society: Chicago in the Twentieth Century', Journal of Social History, volume 5, (1971-1972): 210-234; F. Tannenbaum, Crime and the Community, New York, 1957: 128; D. Bell, op. cit.: 142-148; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 178-180; J. Kobler, Capone: The Life and World of Al Capone, London, 1971: 199; F. Pearce, op. cit.: 123-124.

Conclusion

The study of organized crime has always been fraught with unique problems stemming from the nature of the phenomenon which is usually not subject to empirical observation. The concepts of organized crime itself have been and will probably remain a matter of controversy on which opinions and perspectives are likely to be sharply divided. While some conventional theories tend to focus more on the characteristics that could distinguish organized crime from other forms of crime and less on the society that breeds it, we take the view that organized crime is largely a reflection of the kind of business integrity and political morality that is characteristic of the dominant elements of the community in which it exists; that it cannot be adequately understood outside the context of its history and the politico-economic forces that keep it thriving in society; that it is a phenomenon that is usually found in capitalist societies because its philosophy and that of capitalism is underpinned basically by the same profit motive; and that it is a system of business operating in the illegitimate sector of the capitalist system. The nature of political and economic symbiotic accommodation which exists between organized criminals and officials of the established power structure strongly suggests that the former cannot exist without the collusion and cooperation of the latter, and that organized criminals usually act as servants of the ruling class. Like their counterparts in legitimate business, organized criminal entrepreneurs usually provide goods and services desired by a large minority of the members of the society and their businesses are only morally and not economically distingished from 'legitimate' business.

CHAPTER 2: THE MAFIA PHENOMENON IN SICILY

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THE MAFIA PHENOMENON IN SICILY

Introduction

In the annals of organized crime, the Sicilian Mafia has admittedly become the most popular word for the characterization of underworld activities. It has survived nearly two centuries of wars, and political and economic changes to emerge in recent years as a household word in many countries of the world. Despite constant exposure to the term, not everyone who readily employs it in reference to an underworld activity or a threatening situation can give a lucid interpretation of what the word stands for in the Sicilian context.

This chapter examines the various concepts of the Mafia, its evolution as one of the secret societies that flourished in Europe, how it originated and the purpose of its initial mission; the political and economic conditions in Sicily that preceded its emergence; its evolution as a broker capitalist and the role it played in maintaining the status quo in the latifondo, its political activity and tie-up with the power structure in which it plays the role of a power broker as well as a servant. The chapter also examines the rise of the Left-wing organizations in Sicily in the early part of this century which provided the people with an alternative to the Mafia, thus weakening its power and leading to its decline.

Its power was further undermined by the progressive economic transformation that took place in the island which robbed the mafia the ability to exercise complete control over its mainstay, the latifondo. Mafia's adaptation to all these changes is also examined. As the chapter makes clear, it is only in a capitalist system that a phenomenon such as the mafia can thrive for such a long period.

Different Concepts of the Mafia.

Few would argue that no single term has been so frequently invoked in discussing the underworld activities and yet so little understood by the majority of those who use it as the term 'Mafia'. From its primitive beginnings in the nineteenth century, mafia has now become such an ubiquitous label that analogies can be built on it to match almost any circumstance, often with little or no direct reference to criminality.[1]

Perhaps the worst extravagant use of the word can be observed in the case of North America where the term has consistently been substituted for the activities of the indigenous criminal syndicates because of its ethnic connotation, and because the usage helps create the impression, if not the notion, that organized crime in that part of the world is an import 'made somewhere'. Since the term gained currency in the mid nineteenth century, mafia has been defined and still is

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1. D.C. Smith, The Mafia Mystique, New York, 1975: 4. In the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s, one often heard of the 'Irish Mafia' of the Kennedys, the 'Jewish Mafia' of Senantor Javits, the 'German Mafia' of the White House during the Nixon administration, etc, none of which had anything to do with criminality. Similar inferences are often heard today in North America where the term has virtually replaced the term 'the underworld'.

being defined in various ways, and researchers are still trying to come to grips with the phenomenon conceptually, empirically, and as a social problem, and widely different views on the subject have had their staunch supporters.[1]

For some people the mafia is a criminal association operating at the margin of Sicilian society;[2] a state of mind, a philosophy of life...a particular sensibility prevailing among all Sicilians[3]; the resistance which the whole Sicilian people opposes to all kinds of government and authority;[4] a loose association of crime families;[5] a spirit of hostility to the law and its ministers prevailing among a large portion of the Sicilian population and manifesting itself frequently in vindictive crimes, a sentiment, and not one vast society of criminals as is generally believed, akin to arrogance which imposes a special line of conduct upon persons affected by it.[6] Still for others it is a small group of malefactors who obey local leaders;[7] the complex of many small groupings which have set themselves a variety of objectives that often

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1. A. Blok, The Mafia of a Sicilian Village 1860-1960, New York, 1975: 5. From 1963 to 1972 a Parliamentary Commission in Italy investigated its genesis and present spheres of action.

2. ibid.

3. L. Barzini, The Italians, London, 1964: 253-4.

4. F.M. Crawford, Corleone: A Tale of Sicily, New York, 1898: 127-8. This was the first Mafia novel, and entitled appropriately in retrospect - Corleone. Though burdened with an impossible plot based on mistaken identity and the inviolability of the confessional, it was well received by American readers, and the Atlantic Monthly reviewer found it difficult to overpraise; D.C. Smith, op. cit.

5. A. Bequai, Organized Crime: The Fifth Estate, Lexington, Mass., 1979:1.

6. G. Mosca, Quoted in The Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford, 1933, volume vi.

7. R. Ciasca, 'Mafia' in Encyclopedia Italiana, Rome, 1934-42 volume 21: 863.

bring them against the criminal law;[1] small local associations that lend each other mutual aid and assistance;[2] an appendage of the social order: a corporate structure opposed and detrimental to the State and Italian society;[3] an antagonistic phenomenon and a special method for the consolidation of ruling positions;[4] an attitude or pattern in Sicilian culture;[5] the result of class struggle, etc.[6]

As well, the mafia is viewed not as an organization or a movement with precise ends and specific programmes but the point of confluence of several conflicting tendencies: the defence of the whole society against the threat to its traditional way of life;[7] the aspirations of the various component groups to 'freeze' the undulating movement of social mobility; personal ambitions and the aspirations of active and ruthless individuals.[8] The mafia is also viewed in terms of the control of the community's life by a secret - or rather an officially unrecognized - system of gangs that exercise power on the local level and virtually constitute a parallel government.[9] Like the American syndicates, the mafia is believed by some writers to be a hierarchically centralized organization with

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1. Gaetano Mosca, 'Mafia' in Encyclopedia Italiana, Rome, 1934-42, volume 21: 863.

2. G. Montalbano, 'La Mafia e il Banditismo', in Renascita, No. 10, October 1953.

3. A. Blok, op. cit.

4. H. Hess, Mafia and Mafiosi: The Structure of Power, Lexington, Mass., 1973: 5.

5. F.A. Ianni with E. Reuss-Ianni, A Family Business: Kinship and Social Control in Organized Crime, New York, 1972: 25.

6. G. Servadio, Mafioso: A History of the Mafia from its Origins to the Present Day, New York 1976: xiv.

7. E.J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries, Manchester, 1959: 30-31.

8. Pino Arlacchi, Mafia, peasants and great estates: Society in traditional Cálabria, London, 1983: 6.

9. E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 33.

a supreme head who lives in Palermo, and a system of initiation rites, a code of conduct and recognized passwords.[1] Whatever the degree of validity each of these perspectives may have, it is clear that any brand of organized crime is ultimately a reflection and product of the society in which it thrives.[2] This would be true of the existence of the Sicilian mafia as well as the American syndicates, the Hong Kong Triads and the Japanese Yakuza.[3]

Traditionally, the term 'mafia' has been employed by Italian writers mainly in <u>two</u> different although related senses: as a social attitude or a state of mind, and as a criminal organization, with the former being reputed as the mother of the latter.[4] When used in the first sense, mafia is said to be an attitude more or less common in Latin countries in which recourse to legal authorities was seen as a sign of weakness.[5] A man of honour, as a mafioso is believed to be, is supposed to take matters into his own hands. More recently, however, some writers have also suggested that the term denotes a <u>method</u> of criminal exploitation for profit as illustrated by the activities of the mafia.[6] From the point of view of Italian writers the confusion about the mafia stems

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1. Ed Reid, <u>Mafia</u>, New York, 1964.

2. R. Quinney, <u>Criminology: Analysis and Critique of Crime in America</u>, Boston, 1975.

3. For how these brands of organized crime are both a reflection and product of their respective societies, see, M. Pantaleone, <u>The Mafia and politics</u>, London, 1966; G. Servadio, <u>op. cit</u>. J.L. Albini, <u>The American Mafia: Genesis of a Legend</u>, New York, 1979; J. Landesco, <u>Organized Crime in Chicago</u>, Chicago, 1968; F. Bresler, <u>The Chinese Mafia</u>, New York, 1981; F. Rome, <u>The Tattooed Men: An American woman reports on the Japanese criminal underworld</u>, New York, 1975.

4. L. Barzini, <u>op.cit</u>.; G. Mosca, <u>op. cit</u>.

5. G. Mosca, <u>op.cit</u>.: 36; E.J. Howsbawm, <u>op. cit</u>.: 32.

6. H. Hess, <u>Mafia and Mafiosi</u>, <u>op. cit</u>.: 127-151; J.L. Albini, <u>The American Mafia</u>, <u>op. cit</u>.: 125-126.

mainly from foreign writers and sensation-hungry journalists' failure to draw the distinction between the two usages of the word .[1] In their view, foreign writers have tended to view the subject in terms of a national criminal organization only, which practises secrecy, silence, violence and murder.[2] But these acts, however, are not limited to the mafia alone. No secret organization has been able to survive beyond its first birthday without the practice of secrecy, for secrecy is the weapon of those who are too proud or too puny to fight above ground.[3]

Although today the Mafia is the best-publicized in Europe, it is not the only phenomenon of its kind. At the time of its foundation almost every continent and every country had its own share of secret soceities. They can be viewed as underground springs that have transformed political geology; have fostered progress and crime, illumination and disaster.[4] Their origins can be traced to a variety of causes: chance, grievances, real or imagined, foreign rule, or criminal instinct.[5] Before the birth of the Mafia in Sicily there were apparently many secret societies in Europe and elsewhere whose origins date back even to the Middle Ages or earlier on. In the annals of secret societies, the Sicilian Mafia should be seen in the context of other prominent ones such as the Phansegars or Thugs of India, the Neapolitan Camorra,the

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1.L. Barzini, op. cit.

2.See, for instance, the treatment of the subject by Ed Reid Mafia: Cosa Nostra Syndicate. New York, 1964.

3. Herbert Vivian, Secret Societies: Old and New, London, 1927: 18.

4. ibid.: 11.

5.H. Vivian, op. cit.

Spanish Garduna, the Persian Assassins, the French Carbonari, the Bavarian Illuminati, the United Slavonians and Polish Templars, the English Brotherhood of the Beggars, the Irish Whiteboys and Defenders, the Orange Society, the Chinese Boxers, the White Lotus, the Triads, the Freemasons, and the Rosicrucians, etc.[1] Some of these societies were mystic in character, some were democratic movements, having proved to be the instruments of hidden hands, still difficult if not impossible to discern; some arose as a result of nationalist sentiments. Still others turned to subversion or criminality.[2] Most of these secret societies exist today in name only. A few still exist as respectable societies. The Mafia is one of the few that have survived to the twentieth century.

In recent years, the activities of this secret society, like those of the Hong Kong Triads currently in many parts of the world and of the American syndicates in the first half of this century, have attracted the attention of the world press, especially since the mass trial of its members by the Italian court which began early this year. Like the American syndicates and Hong Kong Triads, the mafia has survived many decades of government changes, inquires, and police mobilization. In so far as the word, in its indigenous sense, stands not for an organization but a certain form of behaviour or conduct which has its genesis in certain political, economic, and historical facts peculiar to Sicily, it would be a mistake to discuss the mafia phenomenon without taking into account the structure of the society in which it thrives.

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1. John H. Lepper, Famous Secret Societies, London, 1933; D.W. Pike, Secret Societies: Their Origins, History and Ultimate Fate, London, 1939; H. Vivian, op. cit.; A. Bequai, Organized Crime: The Fifth Estate, Lexington, Mass., 1979: 10-11.

2. H. Vivian, op. cit.

Mafia's Origin

The Sicilian mafia is believed to have originated as a result of an intricate history of injustice, of unlawful practice of the law, of many years of misgovernment and mismanagement, and of overbearing despotism of colonial rule during which time Sicilians developed widespread mistrust of and hostility toward all State organs and opted for an informal system of self-help institutions to solve their problems.[1] Essentially, the origin of the mafia is bound up with the history of Sicily and its political and economic conditions that helped to bring about the phenomenon.[2] Sicily is an island of some ten thousand square miles[3] so situated in the Mediterranean, off the coast of Italy, as to be a natural stepping-stone for expanding empires reaching out from Africa to Europe,and from the Orient to the Straits of Gibraltar.[4] Thus the history of Sicily is a history of successive foreign conquerors: Greeks, Phoenecians, Romans, Byzantines, Saracens, Normans, Angevins, Catalans, Lombards, Spaniards, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Italians, Germans, and Americans.[5] Although important differences distinguish various periods of colonial domination,[6] Sicily was basically very much an economic and political appendage of outside powers that shaped its history and

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1. G. Schiavo, The Truth about the Mafia and Organized Crime in America, El Paso, Texas, 1962: 23-47: G. Tyler (ed.), Organized Crime in America: A Book of Readings, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1962.
2. ibid; M. Pantaleone, The Mafia and Politics, op. cit.
3. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, 1979: 727-8.
4. G. Tyler, op. cit.: 329.
5. J. and P. Schneider, Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily, New York, 1976: 19; A. Bequai, op. cit.: 11.
6. Dennis Mack Smith, A History of Sicily: Medieval Sicily 800-1713, London, 1968.

controlled its trade and commerce. The island exported grain and animal products and imported manufactured goods.[1]

Popular legends claim that the Mafia was originally a political organization,[2] one of the many secret societies formed in Sicily to free the island of foreign domination, and that the methods used for securing secrecy of operations, unity of command, intimidation and murder, and the silencing of informers were later adopted by this organization.[3] It has been argued that it was out of these repeated conquests, enslavement, conflict and disorder which marked the Sicilian history that individuals and bands of men arose who had little or no respect for the established law and order, and that it was out of such a cauldron that the mafia attitude developed, with persons and groups arising to dispute power, to check oppression and injustice, to raid and pillage, to extort and exploit, to harass the stronger and harness the weak: in short, to be a law unto itself.[4] The frequency with which the government changed from one colonial master to another and the remoteness of these governments from the people are said to be among the factors believed to have made it difficult for the population to identify with the exponents of government, quite apart from their usual impotence.[5] Some of these forms of alien rule gave rise to social phenomena which admittedly had an important effect in the moulding of the character of the region. One of the major results of this situation is believed to have been a strong anarchist dislike of any state system of law or

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1. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit..
2. G. Schiavo, op. cit.: 39.
3. G. Tyler, op. cit.: 231.
4. A. Bequai, op.cit.; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 84; G. Tyler, op. cit.; G. Servadio, op. cit.: 77.
5. H. Hess, op. cit.: 14-15; G. Schiavo, op. cit.

coercion and of any hierarchically or centrally organized governmental structure, and a corresponding withdrawal into an informal system of self-help institutions, notably the family and clientage, which further weakened the ability of the government to assert its authority against the vested interests of the ruling class.[1]

To a large extent what was later called the mafia, coincided with associations of armed strong men and their follwers who exercised jurisdiction on the local level in conjunction with formal authority.[2] The presence of these armed men and the general situation in Sicily by the early nineteenth century were well documented by Pietro Ulloa, General Prosecutor at Trapani. He notes that in 'Sicily there is not a single official who does not prostrate himself before the local men of influence and power, and who does not intend to profit from his office.... This general corruption has induced the population to have recourse to remedies which are strange and dangerous beyond measure.'[3] He observed that in' many towns and villages there were fraternities called <u>partiti</u> (parties), without meetings and without other links than those of dependency upon a chief, who might be a landowner or an archpriest. The prosecutor noted that 'a common fund takes care of their needs, whether it is to have an official dismissed, bribed, or to accuse an innocent person. The population colludes with criminals, and many high-placed magistrates protect these brotherhoods with an impenetrable shield.'[4]

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1. <u>ibid.</u>
2. A. Blok, <u>op. cit.</u>: 94.
3. Letter from Pietro Calo Ulloa, Prosecutor General at Trapani, to the Minister of Justice in Naples, August 3, 1838, cited in G. Schiavo, <u>op. cit.</u>: 35; A. Blok, <u>op. cit.</u>: 95; Dennis Mack Smith, <u>A History of Sicily: Mordern Sicily After 1713</u>, London, 1968: 368.
4. ibid.

This was the beginning of the notorious componenda, an arrangement by which the Captains at Arms recovered part or all of the stolen goods from the criminal, then took a rake-off on the deal and the legitimate owner agreed not to denounce the theft.[1] The prosecutor's letter noted that it was not possible to find witnesses even when crimes were committed in full broad daylight. 'In this heart of Sicily', the letter continued, 'public offices are for sale, justice is corrupt, and ignorance is fostered.'[2] Even as early as 1611 the latest Viceroy, the Duke of Ossuna, was reported to have informed the King that assassination was rife throughout the island, and that murderers were cheap to hire and were protected from the law by their aristocratic employers. 'No one is safe', the Viceroy's letter noted, 'even in his own house. This Kingdom recognizes neither God nor His Majesty the King; everything is for sale, including the lives and possessions of the poor..'[3]

The indifference of the population which regarded the central government as a special form of brigand whose soldiers, tax gatherers, policemen and courts fell upon them from time to time,[4] only helped to exacerbate the government's weakness in dealing with the situation. As Franchetti noted with regards to this almost total lack of cooperation by the population, 'whereas in other countries the difficulty consists in finding somebody who knows anything useful to the investigation, in Sicily, by contrast, the difficulty consists in finding someone who will speak up'.[5]

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1. G. Servadio, op. cit.: 13; D. Mack Smith, op. cit.
2. G. Schiavo, op. cit.; A. Blok, op. cit.
3. G. Servadio, op. cit.: 8.
4. E.J. Hobsbawn, op. cit.
5. L. Franchette, quoted in H. Hess, op. cit.: 24.

These and other developments which are today known as the the mafia and its activities were present in Sicily prior to the middle of the last century. All that was lacking for this intricate, illegal sub-world was a name, and that would be forthcoming in the 1860s.[1]

Certain institutional changes, however, helped to speed up the crystallization of the mafia in western Sicily during the period in question. Among these may be mentioned the abolition of feudalism in 1812 under the British occupation of the island (1806-1815), the unification of the island with mainland Italy in 1860 along with the introduction of the universal suffrage in 1882, the expropriation and sale of Church lands in Sicily in 1867; the transformation of the island from an exporter of wheat to an exporter of labour, resulting from loss of wheat markets to foreign competitors which enjoyed the advantage of the industrial revolution.[2]

Perhaps the most significant changes that occurred in the island following the abolition of feudalism were the introduction of the latifundia system (large landed estates) and the evolution of broker capitalists.[3]

It should be noted that broker capitalism differs from merchant, industrial, and finance capitalism in several important ways. First, from broker to finance capitalism, the number of capitalists tends to decrease while their power to accumulate surplus and make critical decisions tends to

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1. D. Mack Smith, op.cit.; A. Blok, op. cit.: 95; E.J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, op. cit.: 36.

2. A. Blok, op. cit.: 90; E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 37; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 114; G. Tyler, Organized Crime in America, op. cit.: 334.

3. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit. Broker capitalists have also been characterized by other writers as rural capitalists, rent capitalists; E.J. Hobsbawn, op. cit.: 38; A. Blok, op. cit.:56.

increase vastly.[1] Second, compared with the merchants, industrialists, and financiers of metropolis, broker capitalists usually control only marginal assets, their most significant resource being their networks of personal contacts Thirdly, broker capitalism tends to promote short-term speculative investment, reflecting the uncertainties in which ultimate control over markets lies in the hands of unpredicatable foreigners. It selects for those who are able - by structural position or personality - to seize opportunities, mobilizing friends and friends of friends to live, as it were, by their wits. Finally, broker capitalism which was a contributing factor in the rise of the mafia tends to advance by means of short-term fluid, egocentric coalitions, reinforced by friendship ties rather than by long-term corporate associations which organize commerce, industry, and finance in the metropolis.[2]

Broker capitalism which is said to flourish in the periphery of society and appears to be more pronounced in some underdeveloped areas of the world and not in others, is usually associated with the Spanish Empire. Thus Sicily and southern Italy, Latin America, and to some extent the Philippines are said to reveal historical careers strongly influenced by the presence of broker capitalism.[3]

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1. It should be noted that the concept 'broker capitalist' subsumes the concepts 'broker', 'middleman', 'mediator'. Often these terms have been used to characterize men who link local to supralocal political structures, as in the same sense employed by Blok. However, this usage does not preclude earning profits; it in fact emphasizes profitmaking and is considered a more appropriate term than the term 'rural bourgeoisie'. Broker capitalists, like all entrepreneurs, organize themselves politically when it suits them. Under these conditions the concept embraces a political as well as an economic meaning; see J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 10-14; A. Blok, 'Variations in Patronage'. Sociologische Gids, volume 16, 1969: 365-378; see also P. Goubert, 'The French Peasantry of the 17th Century: A Regional Example', in Crisis in Europe 1560-1660, edited by T. Aston, New York, 1967: 174-75.

2. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 11.

3. ibid.: 11-12.

It is known to be symptomatic of colonial situations in which the government is too weak to penetrate the regional domains of power and is consequently forced to operate through the local power holders, the barons and landlords, who are rivals to the government. The Spanish colonial rule was known for its weakness and the baronage of the period often was strong enough to compete with the viceroyal crown.[1] For Sicily, it is said that the island was ruled not by a monarchy but a 'diarchy' in which the relationship between the Crown and barons was such that the latter more or less kept the upper hand; that the bureaucracy was so feeble that it was easily circumvented by powerful individuals for personal profit; and that there was a proliferation of banditry in the countryside and little capacity on the part of the government to provide security.[2] All these created the political structure so congenial to broker capitalism[3] whose elements consisted of herdsmen, civili or signori (gentlemen), and Gabellotti (big leaseholders).

The mafiosi are said to have evolved out of this structure as rival entrepreneurs and were favoured because the state, needing their support, supplied them with protection and patronage, which in turn sustained their power on the

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1. S.F. Romano, Breve Storia della Sicilia: Momenti e Problemi della Civita Siciliana, Verona, 1966: 230-235.

2. ibid; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 41, 55; H.G. Koenigsberger, The Practice of Empire. Emended ed. of The Government of Sicily under Philip 11 of Spain, Ithaca, New York, 1969: 83, 197.

3. A. Blok, op. cit.; J.and P. Schneider, 42-43.

local level.[1] By neutralizing the police and the judiciary they protected a wide range of business interests that depended for profit on illegal acts including the use, threat, or implied threat of violence. Thus mafia is said to be a creature of fluorescent broker capitalism, a violent and parasitic 'businessman's fraternity', and as such it shares much with other social forms found in other broker capitalist societies.[2] The existence of the Mafia in Sicily is necessarily intertwined with the political economy of the country and its activities would testify to our argument that organized crime is largely a vagary of competitive capitalism. It was their ability to move from being defenders of others' interests to harnessing the economy of the country through the use of unlicensed force that enabled the mafia operators to amass the wealth, as in the case of the U.S. syndicates, which in turn enabled them to become a critical factor in Sicilian politics. Opinions are divided, however, as to whether mafia's politics was secondary to its entrepreneurial activity,[3] or the latter was secondary to the former.[4]

Mafia's Evolution and Capitalist Economy

Even though all the elements that constitute what is now called the mafia were present in Sicily prior to the middle of the last century, it is conceivable that the mafia would not

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1. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 9. Sicily, it has been argued that Spain had no theory of empire, and that its strategy called for viceroys to distribute patronage among feudal lords and reconfirm their special priveleges in return for financial support to the empire, H.G. Koenigsberger, op. cit.

2. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 9, 173.

3. ibid; A. Blok, op.cit.: 17-102.

4. M. Pantaleone, The Mafia and Politics, op. cit.; G. Schiavo, op. cit.: 82.

have assumed its current form in the absence of certain institutional changes, especially as they pertain to the ownership of land which was tranformed by law into private property as specialization in wheat led to great latifundia, large estates.[1] This export-oriented monocrop economy, with its associated patterns of land tenure, was accompanied by the rise of certain social groups all which had interests in the land. These included a market-oriented dependence elite composed of great latifundist lords; a feeble noncommercial, nonindustrial urban bougeoisie who were followers of the latifundist lords; peasants who farmed the land under contracts of day labour, tenancy and sharecropping; pastoralists under pressure from the spread of wheat over the land, but able to respond with violence and banditry; and finally the most significant group, rival entrepreneurs who would ultimately supplant the feudal landlords.[2] The historical origin of the Sicilian mafioso can be trace to the land liberation from feudalism in which a rising rural biurgeoisie joined the old aristocrats and gradually replaced the traditional feudal elites by acquiring most of the lands that came on the market[3] and consolidating them into large estates

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1. A. Blok, op. cit.: 90; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 7.

2. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.

3. A. Blok, 'Mafia and Peasant Rebellion as contrasting factors in Sicilian Latifundism', European Journal of Sociology, X, 1969: 95-116 at 95; J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 127; E.J. Hobsbawm, The Primitive Rebels, op. cit.: 40-41; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 28-29.

(latifundia).

It should be noted that the various social groups that arose with specialization in wheat in Sicily were very different from the urban bourgeois entrepreneurs of industrializing northern Europe, for they were estate superintendedts, chief herders, carters, and others who played key roles in the organization of the latifundia. This group was knownto have had their major base of operations in the massaria - the social and administrative headquarters of the latifundia - where the pastoral and agrarian economics of the large estates were articulated.[1] Because of their close relationship to the massaria and its associated complex of activities, these rural entrepreneurs had contacts which the rest of the population did not have, and which provided protection, hospitality, and sustenance without which travel and commerce in the countryside would have been difficulty, if not impossible.[2] This situation in turn gave them a great advantage in dealing with the peasants and herdsmen who worked the land. Their strategie relationship to the massaria complex and their geographic mobility enabled Sicily's rural entrepreneurs not only to organize and control the movement of commodities into export markets but also the movement of the peasants.

The establishment of the latifundia should be seen as a social and economic setback for the peasants, for the common use rights of gleaning and pasturage which they exercised on the former fiefs and which guaranteed them the fundamental means of living were lost in the new establishment.[3]

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1. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 7.
2. ibid.
3. A. Blok, 'The Mafia and Peasant Rebellion', op. cit.: 1-2.

As the avid, rural bourgeoisie excluded them from a share in the land, the creation of the latifundia resulted in a growing number of rural proletariat, thus setting up an explosive situation in which the Sicilian peasants found themselves pitied against two powerful enemies - the rural bourgeoisie or landlords who own the latifondo, and their mafia protectors.[1] Although the Sicilian rural entrepreneurs in the nineteenth century were economically successful by virtue of their acquisition of the large estate holdings, this class of new gentry, unlike the feudal aristocracy of an earlier age, had some difficulty in consolidating its position;[2] it never became a stable and internally coherent ruling group, and often faced pressures from the peasants and herdsmen who have suffered serious dislocations as a result of Sicily's encounter with North Atlantic industrial capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[3]

However, it would appear that the response of the herdsmen (pastoralists) to the displacement caused by the introduction of the latifondo was different from that of the peasants. Where the latter joined mass demonstrations and collectively occupied estates, herdsmen pursued strategies based on acts of prepotency which were planned and executed by individuals and adhoc coalitions. Although the displaced peasants formed bands which robbed and kidnapped notably during the early 1870s and again after the two World Wars, the classic act of the displaced shehperds was said to be

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1. ibid.

2. D. Mack Smith, op. cit.; A. Blok, op. cit.; J. and P. Schneider, op.cit.

3. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 149.

that of banditry and rustling.[1] While rustling was the constant manifestation, peasant uprisings were the occasional symptoms of an ongoing struggle against diminishing resources. It is in this context that the widespread rustling in the first half of this century can be understood, when Paolo Grisafi and his men roamed and pillaged the western interior of Sicily; it is said that his men were victims of the spread of latifundism and were, on the whole, more pastoral than peasant, Grisafi himself being as ex-shepherd.[2]

The growing voraciousness for land on the part of the new gentry only turned the peasantry, especially its expanding landless segments, into a latent revolutionary force. It should be noted that although the Bourbon rule was weak, it was not wholly oppressive and it succeeded in challenging vested interests and whetting peasant aspirations for land. Thus pressed, Sicilian latifondisi and the new gentry often acted to neutralize Bourbon reforms by 'playing on local patriotism, xenophobia and the prevalent dislike of all laws and regulations, by convincing the people that it was the Bourbons who prevented improvement and kept the people poor'.[3]

This powerful myth helped unleash the peasant forces that culminated in the Sicilian Risorgimento that swept away Bourbon rule and from which the new Sicilian ruling class reaped the main benefits at the expense of the peasantry. To defend their land and property the new gentry felt the urgent need for men who could respond with violence to the growing banditry and peasant unrest, and who could ward off the 'unwelcome intervention of the State in land reforms - hence the role of mafiosi.

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1. A. Blok, The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, op. cit.: 30,93-4, 108-109, 128-140; H. Hess, op. cit.: 140-143; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 146.

2. A. Blok, op. cit.: 132-134; J. and P. Schneider, op.cit.: 146.

3. D. Mack Smith, op. cit.: 409; A. Blok, op. cit.: 98.

The mafiosi were recruited from the ranks of the peasantry to provide the large estate owners with armed staff to confront both the impact of the State and the restive peasants, especially in the inland areas of the island where the Bourbon State failed to monopolize the use of physical force. Thus while on the one hand mafiosi heightened class tensions through their control over land, they checked open rebellions by peasants and sustained revolts in several ways: by force, by keeping a hold on outside influence; and by turning outlaws and bandits into allies.[1] From the earliest times the barons had exerted their authority with the help of private armed guards and overseers who were always selected from men with an unusual criminal record which made them particularly suitable for the job.[2] From 1812 onwards, however, when the latifondo was being threatened more and more by the popular peasants' uprisings the gangs of gabellotti and stewards (now known as the mafia), protected by the barons, usurped the authority of the State in the inland areas and ministered their own rough form of justice, dependent not so much on respect for the law as on the fear which they inspired and on their desire to avoid interference from the public authorities.[3]

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1. A. Blok, op. cit.; 96.

2. These were later formed into armed companies or gangs (compagnie d'armi) recognized by the government and they sought to preserve and defend the lord's privileges and territories under his jurisdiction, M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 26-27.

3. ibid.

Although the peasants had become legally free, they obtained their freedom at the cost of title to the land they held under feudal conditions.[1] As had happened to peasants elsewhere, the abolition of 'feudalism' left Sicilian peasants more vulnerable than ever to the market forces.[2] It was an event in which they emerged from one social servitude only to fall into another ecomomic and political dependency.[3] Most serious of all, they lost access to arable land through indebtedness and usurpation, and several times under the Bourbons, they rose up to occupy approriated communal land, set fire to tax records, and attacked agents of the state.[4] This situation which served to emphasize the fundamental social stratification in Sicilian society between those who control and those who are controlled[5] was one of the root causes of a series of peasant revolts that would eventually lead to the modification of the latifondi. Thus for the last century, as Boissevan notes, Sicily has

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1. A. Blok, 'Mafia and Peasant Rebellion', op. cit.

2. J. and P. Schneider; op. cit.; 118.

3. A. Blok, op. cit.: 90.

4. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.; see also E. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, New York, 1969.

5. Essentially, the economic and political life of capitalist societies is primarily determined by the relationship, born out of the capitalist mode of production, between these two classes - the class which on the one hand owns and controls, and the working class on the other; see Ralph Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society: An Analysis of the Western System of Power, London, 1970: 17.

been a land where revolution and violence have been endemic, where economic exploitation of the proletarian masses by a small upper class composed of the bourgeoisie and nobility, often aided by delinquents, went hand in hand with their control of the local and regional adimistation, and their manipulation of it for personal gain. In short, it was, and to an extent still is, said to be a land where the strong survive at the expense of the weak.[1] The contrast between the bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat has thus been not only between employer and employee, but between wealth and poverty, between education and illiteracy.[2] It was within this social environment, it has been noted, that the mafioso emerged as a broker capitalist : to mediate between the land-owning class and the tenant peasants and became the effective instrument for the exploitation of the peasants.[3] The mafia, then,was able to find a foothold in Sicily at first through its control of the partitioned land because the society provided the necessary elements for its

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1. Jeremy Boissevain, 'Patronage in Sicily', Man, volume1, 1966: 18-33 at 19.

2. ibid:20.

3. ibid; J. Albini, The American Mafia, op. cit.: 130-131; M. Pantaleone. op. cit., 23-30; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 8-10, 139-140; A. Blok, 'Peasants, Patrons, and Brokers in Western Sicily' Anthropological Quarterly, Volume 41-42, 1968-1969: 155-169.

its existence and and growth.[1] Thus its birth can be traced to the tensions between the central government and local bourgeoisie on the one hand, and between the latter and the tenant peasants on the other, giving rise to a situation in which the three actors arranged and rearranged themselves in conflict and accommodation.[2]

Although the mafia could not possibly have emerged without a measure of state-formation,[3] it survives because the political development of the country was 'hijacked' by forces within the social system. The mafiosi, as we have indicated, were the creatures of the landlords and they began as armed retainers and ended up as exploiters with

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J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 8-9, 150; A. Blok, op. cit.: 89.

2. A. Blok, op. cit. 10-11.

3. Capitalist enterprise obviously depends to an ever greater extent on the direct support of the state, and can only preserve its 'private' character on the basis of such public help. State intervention actually presided at its birth or at least guided and helped its early steps, not only in such obvious cases as Germany and Japan but in every other capitalist country as well; and it has never ceased to be of crucial importance in the workings of the system, even in the country most dedicated to laissez-faire and rugged individualism; see, for instance, Barrington Moore Jr., The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World, Boston, 1967; P.K. Crosser, State Capitalism in the Economy of the United States, New York, 1960; R. Miliband, op. cit. 10, 72; Gabriel Kolko, The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, New York, 1963.

considerable autonomy.[1] The evolution of the mafia in Sicily may be divided into two stages: (1) before the universal franchise in Italy when the mafioso stood between the landlords and tenant peasants and used violence to keep the latter in their place, with the connivance of the State; and (2) after the universal franchise, following the end of feudalism, when they became the intermediary between politicians and peasants and used their position to procure votes for politicians.[2] Essentially, the mafioso began as a rural capitalist entrepreneur through his monopoly of land and its products in the last century and by the middle of the present century he was already on his way to becoming a corporate, rich entrepreneur.

The evolution of mafioso as an entrepreneur was made possible because the society possessed the essential socio-economic preconditions for this purpose. In societies characterized by the mafia-type organization, the market often plays a decisive role; they are usually riven by intense horizontal conflicts between individuals and groups; and they suffer from the weakness or absence altogether of any principle of centralized regulation of social and economic relations or state control over the use of violence.[3] As a result of the abolition of serfdom, a new relationship developed between master and labourer, based on the principle of 'rent capitalism' which arose through

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1. A. Blok, op. cit.; E. J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.

2. J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 131; Blok, op. cit.

3. P. Arlacchi, 'The Mafioso: From Man of Honour to Entrepreneur', New Left Review, 118, 1979: 60.

commercialization and transformation undertaken in a plain profit-seeking spirit.[1] At the same time the private armed companies disappeared and were replaced by stewards and campieri who were more suited to the changed conditions by virtue of their ability to wield violence.

The absentee landlords who now lived in Palermo to be near the court entrusted their lands to the middleman, the gabellotto, in return for a specified annual rent.[2] The gabellotto then cultivated the land himself or sublet it so that his profits not only allowed him to pay the gabella (rent) to the owner, and the stewards' and campieri's wages, but also to put aside a tidy profit for himself. By using violence, the gabellotto, backed by his retinue of armed guards, managed to impose the most iniquitous leases and to pay ridiculously low wages to the peasants who worked the land,[3] thus exploiting the peasants even more than their

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1. Among the measures adopted (by the rent capitalist) included: appropriation of the means of production, the creation of indebtedness and opportunities to place the peasants in perpetual obligation. Rent capitalism was true capitalism in so far as it was marked by a striving for unlimited profit; it differed from the more recent 'capitalism' in that it was not linked with production but rather was satisfied with skimming off its proceeds, see Hans Bobek, 'The Main Stages in Socio-Economic Evolution from a Geographical point of view' inPhilip L. Wagner and Marvin W. Mikesll (eds.), Readings in Cultural Geography, Chicago, 1962: 234-237; A. Blok, The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, op. cit.: 56-7.

2. E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.; 39-40.

3. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 26; Cesara Bruno, La Sicilia e La Mafia, Roma, 1900; 61.

former feudal barons had done.[1] Because there were more peasants looking for tenancy than there was tenancy available on the latifondo[2], the gabellotto was able to extract from the peasants the right of 'protection' while they conceded to his armed guards payments in kind of varying magnitude.[3] Thus the presence of a market in a determining role is seen as a fundamental prerequisite of mafioso power and behaviour since the internal competition that he encourages plays an important role in securing the mobility, instability and stratification of all social positions essential to mafioso type activities.[4] It can be argued that the existence of the mafioso would be inconceivable in a centralized, regulated economy, or in an economy that is organized

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1. Among the inequitable measures pursued by the gabellotto was the fact that he used two different measures: a small one when giving out seed, loans, and other soccorsi (aids) in grain; and a larger one when claiming these advances and dues from the crops at the threshing floor; A. Blok, op. cit.: 55; J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 133.

2. The availability of peasants' surplus labour enabled the gabellotto to set the terms of payment. It is this form of economic exploitation that Marx spoke about when he observed: "The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of the direct producers determines the relation of domination and servitude, as it grows directly out of production itself and in return reacts upon it as a determinant...",
K. Marx, Capital, volume 3, London, 1962: 841-842.

3. H. Hess, op. cit.: 36; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.. Mafioso not only used his power to force terms on tenants and sharecroppers, he also used it to force them on the absentee landlords, E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 38.

4. P. Arlacchi, 'The Mafioso', op. cit.

on cooperative lines. The penetration of the market by the mafioso is seen to be due partly to the widespread struggle between individuals and groups,[1] but more importantly to the class struggle between the rich and the poor, between the landed bourgeoisie and the agricultural proletariat.[2] As the gabellotto, now a mafioso in his own right, sought to increase his profits, he applied a variety of pressures on the landowners aimed at forcing them to sell the land: withholding of payments due, threats of violence, of kidnapping, and intimidation of the landowners. All of these measures would eventually force the landowners to put up their land for sale, only to find that the gabellotto was the sole bidder, for no one would dare to challenge his power. The land would normally be offered to him at an absurdly low price.[3]

Indeed, it is said that by the second half of the last century the mafia had completed this stage in its evolution and mafioso had become a rural capitalist entrepreneur whose aim was to rob the legitimate authorities of their power and to preserve the feudal structure in the countryside.[4] As the mafiosi began to assume the powerful roles of landowners

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1. ibid.

2. S.F. Romano, Momenti del resorgimento in Sicilia, Florence, 1952: 291-92; J.L. Albini, The American Mafia: Genesis of a Legend, New York, 1979: 133; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 28.

3. J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 129; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 29; A. Blok, 'Mafia and Peasant Rebellion', op. cit.: 104.

4. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 27.

and patrons, they gradually gained a foothold into the legitimate and illegitimate sectors of Sicilian society[1] by imposing themselves on people as arbitrators and peace-makers, and ultimately as silent and speedy executors of a form of rough justice based on the law of an eye for an eye.[2] The role of the mafioso in mediating conflicts, and the very existence of such a role stemming from a state of permanent competition, only become explicable on the assumption of a competitive society constantly favouring the stronger party; for in the absence of that, there would be no call for mediation.[3] However, in the series of peasant insurrections, many local governments found the mafia a useful tool for subjugating the peasants by re-establishing the campagnie d'armi (armed guards) which had been abolished by royal decree in 1837.[4]

Mafia power usually arises in a situation of anarchic competition and represents an excellent instrument of social mobility and promotion in a capitalist commercial system where risky, fraudulent, and unscrupulous practices are indispensable to success.[5] Although mafia power is underpinned by a situation of universal competition and the existence of mafioso requires a state of competition, tensions and conflicts which he actively encourages to allow

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1. J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 130.
2. M. Pantaleone. op. cit.
3. P. Arlacchi, 'The Mafiose', op. cit.
4. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.
5. P. Arlacchi, 'The Mafioso', op. cit:

for his mediatory and protective role, his behaviour in the market place is essentially one of anti-competition, and he usually reacts back on its cause in the form of monopoly and control.[1] His control of the market activities,[2] and more importantly of votes, is rationalized as a firm deterrent to the unfettered spread of the conflicts, hostilities and feuds that would otherwise ensue from the logic of the anarchic competition of the market.[3]

Thus in his shrewd business activities, the mafioso usually tends to mediate between market forces and society by 'protecting' the latter from the potential destruction in the ambition of the unregulated market to impose itself as the supreme regulator of all economic relations.[4] The

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1. ibid.

2. In their expansion into other economic zones, the mafiosi found in irrigation a potent weapon. For instance, irrigation works near the coast of Palermo depended upon water originating in the mountains. Control over water sources gave mafiosi a new and particularly severe sanction: they could deny water to an uncooperative fruit grower; see J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.:182.

3. The mafia of the markets controls the sale of fertilizers, the supply of labour, the provision of guards for the citrus fruit plantations, the transport of the fruit, the control of prices to be paid to commission agents and shopkeepers, the management of places of entertainment, cafes and other extra-market transactions; see M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 170; N. Lewis, The Honoured Society: the Mafia Conspiracy Observed, London, 1964: 70.

4. ibid.
It should be noted that the mafiosi are accepted by some officials as order-maintaining factors. We may recall Giussep Russo's and Don Calogero Vizzini's assessment of themselves and, more particularly, Vizzini's words, 'The fact is that in any society there must be a category of persons who put things right when they have become complicated'; H. Hess, op. cit.: 139.

position of the mafisosi as local men of influence enabled them to cash in on the vast body of landsales to peasants under the various reform laws. As Renda analysed the situation, 'It may be affirmed that practically all purchases of small peasant property have been negotiated through the mediation of mafioso elements"[1] to whose hands much of the land and other assets have therefore tended to cling.[2] All these activities naturally brought the mafioso a number of economic advantages so that in the rural centres particularly, the mafioso was the only person, except the landowner himself, whose activities enabled him to amass an enormous fortune. In this way, the more outstanding mafiosi became well-to-do members of the bourgeoisie and, drawn by the need for closer contact with the urban bureaucracy and even more by the attractions of livelier commercial and industrial activities, gradually moved into the larger towns.[3] Even then the migration did not bring any decline in the mafia's connections with the feudo and far more important was the method which the mafia adopted to resist the destruction of its mainstay, the latifundist economy.[4]

In this regard, the mafia was reminiscent of the many historical instances in which the local capitalists were powerful enough to resist being dislodged by technologically and organizationally more advanced outsiders. Hausa

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1. F. Renda, 'Funzione e basi sociali della Mafia', in Il movimento Contadino nella Societa Siciliana, Palermo, 1956: 218.

2. E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 49.

3. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 33.

4. E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 48.

cattle traders in Nigeria,[1] German towns in the Renaissance,[2] and small shopkeepers in the French Revolution[3] are a few among many notable examples.

Mafia's control still persists in certain traditional activities which link the country districts with the towns. Thus usury with money and water, overcharging for all kinds of merchandise handled by mafiosi, monopolization of the vegetable and citrus trade and the consequential obstruction of the building of dams, the unlawful occupation of the most favourable spots in the market, the market stalls protected by a mafioso in return for payment (the well-know institution of the 'piazza assicurata'), monopolization of orders for a building firm or of licences for the retail of motor fuel, the socially and historically significant intervention in land transactions and the individual cases of mediation in debtor-creditor relationships, are all features of mafioso control and monopoly which contribute to the regulations of economic relations in the Sicilian social system, and they are ways and means by which the mafioso can improve his economic positions.[4] The mediatory role by the

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1. A. Cohen, Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba town, Berkeley, California, 1969.

2. E.F. Heckscher, Mercantilism, rev. ed., edited by E.F. Soderlund, London, 1955: 62-73.

3. E.J. Hobsbawn, The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848, New York, 1962: 69-70.

4. H. Hess, op. cit.: 133-145; G. Servadio, op. cit.; N. Lewis, op. cit.; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 182.

mafioso in the numerous cattle thefts and stolen goods has often been more successful than the government efforts to recover the property. Mori estimates that in seventy-five percent of all cases the State's agencies achieved absolutely nothing, while mediation by mafioso, on the other hand, remains unsuccessful in only five percent of all cases - the owner losing only about a quarter or a third of the value of the stolen property to the mafioso as a 'present', part of which is passed on to the robber.[1] Because of the weakness of the state in recovering such stolen goods, the victim does not normally turn to it but to a man who is respected and whom he knows to have connections in all circles of the population, especially among the delinquents.[2]

It has been said that mafia employees invariably receive lower wages than the trade union minimum and that they suffer greater insecurity and irregularity in the conditions of their work.[3] A reduction in the cost of wages is usually secured by a variety of ways: reducing the number of days of work,[4] an evasion of health and other insurance contributions, and non-payment of overtime, all of which give

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1. The Last Struggle with the Mafia, London, 1933: 96-8.

2. D. Mack Smith, op. cit.: 368-69; H. Hess, op. cit.

3. P. Arlacchi, 'The Mafioso', op. cit.; Danilo Dolci, Waste, London, 1963; see also R. Milibnd, op. cit., chapter 2: 'Economic Elites and Dominant Class'; K. Marx, Capital: 1, London, 1974: 594.

4. Danilo Dolci, Waste, op. cit.

mafioso distinct comparative advantages and place his enterprises in a position to do better than those of his 'normal' competitors.[1]

The territorial monopoly over the use of violence by mafioso has been replaced by a series of monopolies over industrial branches and natural resources as a result of discouragement of competition, thus creating a protectionist umbrella in the area of the market that is of particular concern to his enterprises.[2] This situation usually helps to shield the mafioso from the pressures of market competition and enables him to secure orders, contracts, and raw materials at comparatively advantageous prices. The legality with which the mafioso carries on his enterprises is usually not subject to government inspection. In effect, an entrepreneurial mafioso is not like the 'normal' capitalist who must rely exclusively on the accumulation of profits for investment purposes; on the contrary, he can always draw on the considerable sums of capital acquired from illegal activities from sources extraneous to the market to finance his ambitious investment programs.[3]

Whether the entrepreneurial mafiosi can continue to maintain the comparative advantages which they have long enjoyed in

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1. P. Arlacchi, 'The Mafioso', op. cit.
2. P. Arlacchi, Mafia, peasants and great estates, op. cit.:114.
3. P. Arlacchi, 'The Mafioso', op. cit.

the Sicilian economy is rather debatable. Given the progressive metamorphosis in the Italian politics and economy in recent years and the concomitant social disintegration of vast areas of southern Italy, including the abolition of the latifondi, it would appear that the mafia has to adapt if it is to survive. However, given its entrenched position in the Sicilian society, any decline in its connection with the feudo would have to await the governments's action on land reform. Thus by the end of the last century the foundation of the mafia as an economic institution in Sicily had been firmly laid. This process was apparently made possible by its control of local politics and its relationship with the power structure.[1]

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1. J.L. Albini, op. cit.; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.:174.

Mafia and Political Activity

The mafia is not only an economic institution but also a political one whose activities benefit not only its members but also serve the interests of the ruling class. The immense power which the mafioso wields in Italian politics derives not only from his ability to use threat and violence but also from his ability to penetrate every facet of Italian society, especially the politicians and other office holders.[1] In any capitalist society it has become a common phenomenon that the possession of economic power or wealth often leads, directly or indirectly, to the possession of political power.[2] The mafiosi as local men of economic power have been able to dominate Italian politics partly through their ability to use unlicensed force, and partly and more importantly through the symbiotic accommodation[3] that has long existed between them and the ruling class which provided them with a political shield that neutralized the work of the police and the judiciary.[4] A political shield and a neutral or impotent police-judiciary combined to guarantee to mafiosi immunity from prosecution or imprisonment.

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1. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.; J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 130; E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 43.

2. Miliband, op. cit.; A. Block, East Side-West Side: Organized Crime in New York 1930-1950, University College, Cardiff, 1980: 239-241.

3. E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 44.

4. J. and P Schneider, op. cit.: 173-4.

James Scott's analysis of corruption argues that this phenomenon occurs when private interests exert extraordinary pressure on the administration of law, rather than on the legislative process.[1] In this sense of the term, corruption would be most pronounced among those who are not rich or powerful enough to make law, but are sufficiently wealthy and powerful to determine its application. The Sicilian mafiosi appear to fit perfectly into this category from the mid-1870s on, and especially during the early decades of the present century.[2] Although where there is an established structure of power, 'honour' tends to belong to the mighty; in lawless communities, however, power is rarely scattered among an anarchy of competing units but usually clusters round local strong-points whose typical holder, as in the case of the mafioso, is the private magnate or boss with his body of retainers and dependants and the network of 'influence' which surrounds him and causes men to put themselves under his protection.[3]

It may be useful to realize that probably in any society there are sections which the state is unable or unwilling to control and in which it has, at least at a pragmatic level, to yield power to 'parapolitical' associations.[4] These

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1. J.C. Scott, 'The Analysis of Corruption in Developing Nations", Comparative Studies in Society and History, Volume 11, 1969: 315.

2. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit: 155.

3. E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 32-33.

4. A. Blok, 'Mafia and Peasant Rebellion', op. cit.: 103.

forms of distributing power may have feudal antecedents as was doubtless the case in Sicily where, up to the early nineteenth century, the barons, later to be displaced by the mafiosi, were formally invested with public power. It is important to note, however, that once such informal groupings have obtained a foothold, they are increasingly less inclined to surrender power.[1] Instead, these structures may prevent the larger, formal framework from functioning according to its own rules by invading some of its institutions, while corroding others. Thus the phenomenon of mafia may be understood politically in terms of a modus vivendi resulting from the interaction between the larger, encapsulating structure of the modern state on the one hand, and the smaller encapsulated feudal structure of the village.[2] Pervading both the state and the village the mafia has, so to speak, its feet in each structure thus overarching both. In fact, the mafia is not an appendix of Sicilian society, but rather its very backbone.[3]

Right from its emergence, the Sicilian mafia has sought to monopolize and exercise the power that belongs to the

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1. ibid: 104.

2. For the concepts of parapolitical association, structure and encapsulation, see F.G. Bailey, Stratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics, Oxford, 1969: 144-185; also see
Eric R. Wolf, 'Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies', in Michael Banton (ed.), The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies, Edinburgh, 1966.

3. A. Blok, op.cit.

state. Its mediatory role was not confined to the economic field but often it tended to usurp the state's authority. As one official observed in 1838:

> As soon as thefts take place mediators appear on the scene and offer to arrange the recovery of the stolen objects. The number of these arrangements is infinite.[1]

Reticence and secrecy, at times amounting to conspiracies of silence, especially vis-a-vis legal authorities, and embodied in a code of behaviour that is neatly summed up by the term omerta,[2] expresses the sway and range of established local power domains. Silence is usually enforced by violence or threat of it upon the population and talking (cantare, literally singing) involves in effect attempts to draw on external forces that would upset the established balance of power.[3] Through their manipulation of this complex cultural code and social control it entails, mafiosi have been able

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1. Part of Pietro Cala Ulloa's letter, Prosecutor General at Trapani, of 1838, cited in H. Hess, op. cit.: 143.

2. G. Servadio 'Wall of Silence in the war against the mafia', The Times, 26 February,1970.

3. Essentially, Omerta is both a Sicilian social value and behaviour pattern manifesting itself in the Sicilian's ego as well as his actions, and is believed to have its origin in the constant changes in the Sicilian political history. It represents suspicion and resentment of governments and law which are viewed as mechanisms of exploitation. Even after unification with Italy, Maxwell notes that Sicily continued to contribute far more in taxes than it received in benefits from the Italian government; see J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 108; Gavin Maxwell, Bandits, New York, 1956: 28-29; F.G. Friendman. 'The World of La Miseria', Partisan Review, volume 20, (March-April, 1953): 224-225; T. Sellin, Culture Conflict and Crime, New York, 1938: 64-65.

to isolate the local population from external rival powers and thus make the people depend on them. In this way, omerta became structurally pervasive throughout the whole community, albeit in varying degrees.[1] It is important to see the code not in isolation, but as an aspect of the real interdependencies between people who formed the community in which omerta constitutes a very concrete and real part of the behaviour of the people who depend on each other in specific and fundamental ways.[2]

Like power brokers elsewhere, the Sicilian mafia basically wields power in two spheres: its actual control in either sphere depends upon its success in dealing with the other.[3] Far from replacing the State or constituting a State within a State, as has been so often noted by some writers,[4] the mafiosi depend on the State since their local and regional power domains exist only by virtue of their access to the larger domains of the State. The concept of political and power broker is particularly helpful in understanding this symbiosis, for the very articulation of mafiosi with public authorities and national politicians

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1. A. Blok, The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, op. cit.: 211-212.

2. ibid.

3. Richard N. Adams, 'Brokers and Career Mobility Systems in the Structure of Complex Societies', Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, volume 26, 1970: 315-327.

4. For the view of the mafia as a parallel system to the government, see E.J. Hosbawn, op. cit.: 36-37.

often renders any State-based action or reform against them abortive.[1]

As political middlemen and power brokers, the mafiosi simultaneously carry on active roles in the community and in the national structures and they gain power through their extrordinary access to information and to powerful individuals in the society.[2]

The relationships between mafiosi and formal authorities are strongly ambivalent. On the one hand, mafiosi tend to disregard formal law and are able to withstand the impact of the legal and governmental apparatus. On the other, they act in connivance and collusion with formal authorities, and validate their control through covert and pragmatic relationships with them. This symbiosis distinguishes mafiosi from outlaws and bandits whose power domains are also buttressed by physical force but contrast openly with those of the State.[3] Although all power is ultimately based on

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1. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.

2. Organized crime, generally speaking, cannot exist in any society without the collusion and cooperation of these powerful individuals who are invariably government office holders. It is precisely for this reason that organized crime has logically and analytically been viewed as one of the crimes of the powerful; see for instance, W.J. Chambliss, On the Take: From Petty Crooks to Presidents, Bloomington, Indiana, 1978; F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance, London, 1976.

3. Charles Tilly, The Vendee, New York, 1967: 80; A. Blok, op. cit.: 6. Events have demonstrated how Mafia and organs of the state, theoretically competitors for the monopoly of the control of violence, in fact collaborated, often with very similar methods, in the repression of the most serious malfunctions and threats to the established order. In the many episodes of banditry or common criminality, as in other cases of organized political dissent or trade union activity, the intervention of the armed power of the mafiosi on the side of the official forces of order was decisive in the killing, capture or neutralization of the deviants; see P. Arlacchi, Mafia, Peasants and Great Estates, op. cit.: 117; N. Lewis, The Honoured Society, op. cit.: 150-153, 157-163; Danilo Dolci, Outlaws, New York, 1961.

the ability to use force, in the case of organized criminals, however, this statement must be qualified. Their power and existence derives more from the symbiotic relationship that exists between them and their powerful friends in the power structure[1] than from their ability to use unlicensed force. It should be noted that in almost all the instances where bandits have used unlicensed force without the authorization and sanction of the established legal authorities, it has invariably led to their immediate expulsion from the community or complete destruction.[2]

More specifically, the Sicilian mafia owes its longevity to the collusion and connivance of the state authorities and this in turn accounts to a large measure for its ability to permeate almost every facet of Sicilian establishment. As one Communist senator appropriately observed, 'The mafia goes where the power is, that is why the Christian Democrat party is riddled with it, not only on a regional level. The high protectors, the ones elected through the power of the mafia, are in Rome.'[3] The collusion between the mafia and the (long ruling) Christian Democrat party has long been common knowledge among well-informed Italians and outside keen observers. In 1968, the then president of the Antimafia Commission and a Christian Democrat deputy, Cattanei, was able to admit as much:

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1. G. Servadio, 'The Political untounchables who protect the mafia', The Times, 29 September, 1972.

2. See, C. Mori, The Last Struggle with the Mafia, op. cit.: 165-185, with regards to the destruction of the bandits of the Madonie; H. Hess, op. cit.: 48. On the other hand, see, E.J. Hobsbawm's article, 'Social Bandit: A Comment', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 14, 1972: 504-507.

3. A testimony before an Antimafia Commission by Senator Li Causi, Cited in G. Servadio, op. cit.: 211.

> The mafia goes with power. That is why they say that there is the phenomenon of collusion between the mafia and the Chrisrian Democrats, but I think this happens mainly in Sicily and it is difficult to distinguish between organized delinquency and the mafia....[1]

If anything, organized delinquency such as banditry, does not usually enjoy the protection of the State. The contrast between a bandit and the mafioso vis-a-vis the state protection cna be seen when the two clash with the state. The former usually ends up taking to the hills, while the latter usually gets acquitted for lack of proof - 'per insufficienza di prove.'[2] The series of Antimafia Commissions since the 1960s, like the crime Committees in the United States, have been more often a public relations exercise designed to appease the moral sentiments of the society than mafia's enemies have traditionally been the left-wing politicians, the communists and socialists.[3] In the nature of Italian politics, there commissions have not always come about without considerable opposition by the right wing members of Christian Democrat party which had traditionally been sympathetic to the mafia.[4]

It is noted that when the Socialists introduced one such bill in the early 1950s for the constitution of a special body

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1. ibid.: 213.
2. H. Hess, op. cit.: 48; N. Lewis, op. cit.
3. In 1947 Salvatore Giuliano who had followed Don Calo and the mafia into Christian Democrat party, attacked the members of left-wing parties and peasant trade unions who had gathered at Portella della Ginestre with bombs and machine guns. At the trial that followed after Giuliano had been killed, his lieutenant testified that it was Maechesano, Prince Alliata, and Bernardo Mattarella, all members of the ruling Christian Democrat party, who ordered the massacre, and that before the massacre they had had a meeting with Giuliano; see N. Lewis, The Honoured Society, op. cit.: 197; G. Servadio, 'The Real Victims of the Mafia', Evening Standard, 5 July, 1974.
4. G. Servadio, Mafioso, op. cit.: 197.

to inquire into the phenomenon, it was opposed by its sympathizers; and that Minister Scelba had turned down one such proposal which had come from the Communists in 1948.[1] It is further reported that it was not only the Regional authorities who had repeatedly refused to investigate mafia matters but that Rome had also claimed that the mafia did not exist, or that it was an unimportant phenomenon peculiar to Sicily.[2] But times, however, have changed for the mafia.

In the late sixties collusion between mafia and politicians became so evident to the public that some well-informed observers felt that something more than an inquiry was needed to deal with the situation. As the editor of L'Ora put it in 1969,

> The Mafia today is not what it was ten years ago. Its new aim is to be able to control from an invisible chair. Since the establishment of the Antimafia Commission, many have been punished, but the political names, materially linked with the Mafia, remain untouched... There are forces within the Commission that are there to prevent the inquiry from moving toward the political field, which is now the centre of the mafia. The Christian Democrat party would need courage to allow the truth to come out, because the power of the party here in Sicily is based on the strength of votes that the mafia has and can produce.[3]

In 1976 the new Antimafia Commission, after examining the symbiotic relationships between the mafia and its powerful masters, came to the conclusion that the mafia was strong because 'it has penetrated the structure of the State, and not only in Sicily'. The Commission stated that the mafia with its extraordinary flexibility has always known how to survive and prosper in every surrounding, that it has succeeded in doning so by asserting itself as an autonomous extralegal

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1. ibid.
2. ibid; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 195-225.
3. G. Servadio, op. cit.: 214.

power, by forging links with public power in order to operate within them, and manipulate them for its own ends.[1] The Commission observed that 'although the Mafia has lost its former prestige with the Sicilian population, it still thrives and has transformed itself, as its custom, keeping pace with developments in society at large'.[2] The Commission believes that the mafia has implanted its roots in the Northern regions of Italy and penetrated the banking and credit business, the tax collecting firms, the wholesale markets,and is active in the 'web of unrevealable relations that the Mafia continues to keep with public institutions'.[3]

The great hopes of exposing the mafia and wiping it out through the new weapon of the Commission have so far remained an illusion. The Commission;s recommendations, such as measures against reticent witnesses and confiscation of property acquired through mafia activities aimed at hitting neo-capitalist mafia at its economic roots, were reported to have been received with less enthusiasm by the government. When the volumes of the Commission's report were published, it is said that every effort was made to confuse their message and diminish their value, and that the work of the Commission was drowned in a sea of slande.[4] In its later publication, the Antimafia Commission noted that magistrates, trade unionists, prefects, journalists and police authorities

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1. ibid.: 217-218.

2. ibid.: 219.

3. ibid; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.

4. The Antimafia Commission not only developed the history of the links between mafia and public power in Sicily, what it is, what it has been, and why it has not been eliminated, it also handed to both Chambers and to the nation a document which frankly shows the weaknesses and the lack of courage in denouncing the links which all parties, excluding the Socialists and Communists, have kept with the mafia, the traditional procurer of votes; G. Servadio, op. cit.: 220.

expressed an affirmative judgment on the existence of more or less intimate links between the mafia and the public authorities and that some trade unionists were of the view that the mafioso is a man of politics.[1]

In fact, it can be said that no institution in Sicily is immune from, and beyond the reach of, the mafia. King and Okey have noted that where the mafia is strong, it is impossible for a candidate to win a parliamentary or local election unless he promises it his protection.[2] The same situation prevailed in the U.S. with regards to the strength of the syndicates in deciding the outcome of municipal and local elections as late as the 1950s.[3] 'Thus it has its patrons in the Senate Chambers, who use it for political and worse ends; and the government has its well-understood relations with the mafiosi grand electors....'[4]

The Mafia's penetration of the structure of the State does not appear to stop with the legislative branch of the government but can be observed in the operation of the judiciary, especially when the person on trial is a mafioso. Such trials are usually marked by their extreme slowness; and a slow judiciary machine often favours the mafioso's methods of operation; documents often disappear, and real minutes in the file are replaced by the fake ones. Witnesses against the mafioso, even if they could read and write, could be declared illiterate.[5]

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1. ibid.: 216-217.

2. Bolton King and T Okey, Italy today, London, 1909: 121-122; G. Servadio, 'The Political Untouchables who Protect the Mafia', op. cit.

3. See, for instance, K. Allsop, The Bootleggers and their Era, New York, 1961; J. Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, Chicago, 1968, among others.

4. B. King and T. Okey, op. cit.

5. G. Servadio, op. cit.: 46.

The Antimafia Commissions of the seventies revealed that judges tend to dimiss the evidence offered by the police too quickly, while giving too much weight to the retraction of witnesses in court, and that the judge evidently often follow higher instructions.[1] The acquittal of mafiosi usually results from 'insufficiency of proof' which has become the standard formula under which cases brought against mafiosi are eventually committed to oblivion, and nine times out of ten it covers up the fact that essential witnesses have suddenly decided to retract their damaging evidence.[2] This widespread corruption of the social structure of the Sicilian society is apparently not of recent origin but was in evidence before the middle of the last century, as we have already noted.

Structure of the Network

The degree of immunity which members of organized crime enjoy in any society and the extent of their penetration of the different levels of that society is directly related to the nature and composition of their crime network.
Like their counterparts in the U.S, Hong Kong,

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1. G. servadio, op. cit.: 113-114.
2. N. Lewis, op. cit.: 48; H. Hess, op. cit.: 48; J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 192-193. During the trial of Raffaele Palizzolo for the murder of Enanuele Notarbartolo in 1899, for instance, Colajanni later wrote, "Although all the magistrates were convinced that the basic material out of which to build a trial pointed towards Polizzolo, they all cooperated to put him in the clear, and were more than satisfied if they could wind everything up with the formula 'impossible to proceed for lack of evidence,'" see, G. Servadio, op. cit.: 46; H. Hess, op. cit.: 84.

and Japan[1] which have networks of powerful individuals whose interests are usually served by the criminals, the mafia too has its own network of powerful collaborators: political office holders at all levels of government, judges, law enforcers, doctors and lawyers. These enable the mafioso to withstand and evade the impact of legal and governmental apparatus in return for a variety of services which the mafioso can provide.[2] The network of powerful patrons for whom he has performed services provides the mafioso with a zone of influence, a circle of 'friends' to whom he can turn should he need to obtain an unimpeachable alibi for a client, a job for a poor relative, or a lucrative business deal for himself.[3] The services which the mafioso renders to his powerful friends are indeed countless, depending on the situation. They may range from collecting a long outstanding debt to regulating a family feud, and from seeing that

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1. See, for instance, W.J. Chambliss, On the Take: op. cit.: 61-80; F. Pearce, op. cit.: 131-152; F. Robertson, Triangle of Death: The inside Story of the Triads-Chinese Mafia, London, 1977; F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981; F. Rome, The Tattooed Men, New York, 1975.

2. Consider, for example, the case of Tommaso Buscetta who recently made international headlines when he turned government informer and named other mafiosi in Italy and overseas. In 1961, after killing Angelo La Barbera, he needed a passport and so he asked the Questore of the police, Jacovacci. On the same day a letter had come from Francesco Barbaccia, deputy for the Christian Democrat party: 'Gentilissimo Signor dottore Jacovacci, I beg you to allow the renewal of a passport to Signor Tommaso Buscetta, a person in whom I am very interested. Being sure that you will comply, I thank you and greet you cordially", see Servadio, op. cit.: 216.

3. J. Boissevain, 'Poverty and Politics in a Sicilian Agro-town', International Archives of Ethnography, volume 56, 1966: 198-236.

the son of a respected lawyer or doctor receives top marks at school (by threatening the boy's teacher) to protecting a large landed estate against the inroads of an agricultural cooperative seeking to take it over.[1]

The vulnerability of politicians and administrators often helps feed the popular belief that all constituted authorities, whether priest or sacristan, are corrupt - a belief that appears to be held by people at all social levels in Sicily. It helps perpetuate the idea that favourable decisions can be obtained if only the right pressure applied. This attitude, in combination with the social distance which separates the masses from the constituted authorities, has operated to create a social role for the intermediary or protector who can intercede with the authorities on behalf of his client,[2] and who is known to be in alliance with the ruling class.

It can be argued that in the absence of this alliance and network of patrons which the mafia has built over the years, it would have been difficult to see how it could have existed in its present form in Sicily today. While some writers have argued that the mafia was almost eliminated during the Fascist regime of Mussolini but for the intervention of the Allied Military Government headed by the

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1. ibid.
2. ibid.: 220.

U.S.,[1] there are others who think that the phenomenon merely went underground or was driven out of the cities to the mountain areas of western Sicily.[2] Whatever the true picture was, there was abundant evidence to suggest that the activities of the mafia were drastically curtailed by Mori during the period;[3] however, it would appear that the powerful, political elements with mafia connections remained largely untouched.[4] Although the American Army's involvement with the mafia during the occupation of Sicily remains a controversial matter, it would appear that their appointment of well-known mafiosi as mayors and councillors and the subsequent restoration of democracy helped reinstate the mafia back to its full powers and returned to the 'Onorata Soçieta' the weapons which Fascism had snatched away from it.[5]

Although Mori's repressive measures were aimed not only at the mafiosi but also at left-wing elements, yet his action demonstrated that there could be no role for an intermediary in any society in which the State assumes its economy-regulating and security functions and moves against

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1. G. Schiavo, The Truth About the Mafia and Organized Crime in America, El Paso, Texas, 1962: 75-85.

2. A.W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, New York, 1972: 20; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 52.

3. Cesare Mori, The Last Struggle with the Mafia, London, 1933.

4. G. Servadio, 'The political untouchables who protect the Mafia', op. cit.

5. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.; N. Lewis, op. cit.:49; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 54-55.

all formsof private use of force.[1] The mafia has been able to thrive in Sicily because it found the social structure conducive to its growth and existence. In reality, the mafia does not exist for the mafioso only, but also for the powerful, 'respectable' elements in the society who compose its network. While most of the daily papers in the country vie with each other in describing its criminal methods and activities, they usually keep silent about the connections between the mafia and the country's political representatives. It has been observed that there are still many people in Sicily who continue, in all good faith, to look on the mafia as an instrument for keeping order where the state does not exercise its authority sufficiently, or is too weak to control certain situations, and who do not recognize it as a criminal force which prevents the legal government from discharging its function.[2]

As the sociologist Sabino Acquaviva has noted, the mafia, in order to thrive, needs a very precise social and cultural environment, mainly characterized by parasitism. 'Until a few years ago, due to its history, this was a characteristic of the South. Now, little by little, all the country has become infected; Rome started with its patronage, which quickly spread. It is for this reason that the mafia

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1. In describing how the people came into line, Mori noted that as soon as the traditional and compulsory Omerta had been overcome, the people of Sicily, seized with an impulse for freedom, were everyday joining more closely with the government in common action, C. Mori, The Last Struggle with the Mafia, op. cit.: 186.

2. M. Pantaleone, op.cit.: 260.

can extend itself and find a grip in the North...'[1]

Certainly, the practice of banishing convicted mafiosi, the so-called saggiorno obligato, has only served to infect areas which were still uncontaminated by the phenomenon. It has been observed that Britain would be a difficult field for real mafia penetration because the basis of mafia power, political protection, would be difficult to secure. Not only because of the interchanging of ruling parties, but because legalized corruption assures clean money for future company directors.[2] Like all political and economic institutions that have to change with the changing times in order to survive, the mafia too has learned to adapt to the changing situations in Sicily in recent times: the willingness and ability of the government to take on the Mafia, the abolition of the latifondo system, the economic boom in the country in the 1950s and 1960s, the 'great transformation' exemplified in northwards migration, and so on. All these have thus laid the premises for a radical change in the 'meaning' and forms of mafioso power and behaviour.[3]

Adaptation and Change

The Sicilian mafia has adapted remarkably to the economic, industrial as well as political changes that have

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1. Quoted in G. Servadio, op. cit.: 260.
2. G. Servadio, op. cit. 273.
3. P. Arlacchi, op. cit.; E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.

taken place in Italy since the 1940s.[1] Hitherto the mafia's success in the Sicilian society has been largely due to the failure of the Socialist-Communist movement and the weakness of the State in dealing with the phenomenon. Anton Blok has argued that the failure of peasants to change their society through socialism was intimately related to the success of mafia.[2] Its 'alliance' with the power structure made it all but impossible for the leaders of the Sicilian fasci (peasant movement) to weld it into an effective trade union movement. For instance, in 1893, a regional Socialist congress met in Sicily, but not long afterward Crispi, the then Prime Minister, on the advice of Sicilian deputies to Parliament, imposed martial law and dissolved the fasci by force.[3] A second uprising in 1897-1898 was similarly repressed. That a socialist movement should have failed to coalesce among Sicilian peasants appears to be consistent with Eric Wolf's observation that peasants must have leverage if they are to sustain a revolt,[4] and they must have enough freedom from their oppressors to grow their own food and

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1. The need to follow the wind of change is probably a common characteristic among all organized criminals everywhere, and is probably dictated by the desire for survival. Similar adaptation has been noted in respect of organized criminals in other countries; see for instance, W.P. Morgan, The Triad Societies in Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1982; F. Rome, op. cit.; J.L. Albini, op. cit.

2. A. Blok, Mafia and Peasant Rebellion, op. cit.

3. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 123.

4. E. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, New York, Harper & Row, 1969.

food for their guerrillas and leaders.[1] Such leverage, however, was not possible for Sicilian peasants by the close of the last century as mafiosi in particular, and other broker capitalists in general, not only assisted the repression of the fasci but also held out the alternative of jobs, favours and protection to at least some client peasants willing to join their ranks.[2]

A number of events, however, took place in the early part of the present century which weakened the mafia's hold on its traditional mainstay, the latifundist economy, and which led to its decline. Among these was the rise of Fascism under Mussolini which loosened the mafia's hold on the latifondo and its overwhelming influence in the nomination and election of political leaders.[3] It has been argued, however, that the Fascist campaign against the mafia revealed its growing weakness more than they contributed to it, and that it ended with very much the same tacit working agreement between the local men of wealth and power and the central government as before.[4] Nevertheless, by abolishing elections Fascism effectively deprived the mafia of its main currency for purchasing concessions from Rome.

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1. H. Alavi,'Peasants and Revolutions' in The Socialist Register, R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds.), London, 1965.

2. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit: 124.

3. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 44; A. Blok, The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, op. cit.: 181-182; G. Schiavo, op. cit.:83.

4. E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 47.

Secondly, the rise of the peasant leagues and the Socialists (later Communists) which provided Sicilians with an alternative to mafia, while at the same time alienating them from a body which was now considered a terrorist force directed againsts the Left, tended to diminish the base of mafia's power.[1] The series of clashes between the mafia and the Socialist-Communists and the massacres at Villalba (1944) and at Portella della Ginestra (1947), the attempted assassination of the leading Sicilian Communist Girolamo Li Causi and the killing of various union organizers, all helped to widen the gap during the post-fascist period.[2] The rise of the Socialist-Communist votes since 1946 has been marked in the most mafia-riddled provinces and this trend has continued to the present time. This would appear to suggest that the mafia is no longer able to contol local elections and that consequently it has lost much of the power that comes from patronage. This situation has tended to reduce its political role to that of a powerful pressure group.[3]

Thirdly, the rivalries and differences between the 'old' and the 'young' mafia have generated during the first post World War period profound internal divisions and dissensions that broke up the cohesion of the mafia on which much of its

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1. ibid: 44-5; G. Servadio, op. cit.: 44, G. Schiavo, op.cit.: 84-5.

2. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.; 12-13, 88-89, 155, 203; N. Lewis, The Honoured Society: 150-153, 157-163; A. Blok, op. cit.: 204-205.

3. E.J. Hobsbawm, op. cit.: 45; G. Schiavo, op. cit.: 83.

strength depended.[1] Added to all these was the ability of the government to exercise its authority, albeit in a limited way, against the mafia, especially in recent years.. In the circumstances the mafia probably realized that if it was to survive, it would have to expand its business and economic horizon beyond the control of the latifondo.[2] Perhaps the first warning to the mafia of the government's determination to take control of the situation and which apparently was instrumental in compelling the mafia to look beyond the feudo came in 1951 when the Sicilian Regional Asssembly passed the Land Reclamation Act which prohibited any one person in Sicily from owning more than 500 acres of land. At the same time the government set up Boards to oversee land reclamation and reform.. This Act was further strengthed by the Gullo-Segni Act which prohibited sub-letting of feudo and which thus hampered the mafia's traditional hold on the rural areas of Sicily; and it did away with the old system of gabellotto, supervisors and campieri.[3] Nevertheless, the mafia continued to influence the rural economy in Sicily through its control of the Boards just mentioned. With the intention of fostering lucrative activities outside the traditional scope of the feudo, the mafia has managed to work

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1. ibid: 46-47; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 170-172; G. Schiavo, op. cit.: 81.

2. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.

3. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 167; E.J. Hobsbawn, op. cit., 48-49.

itself into nearly all the public offices of the Regional government: offices dealing with the provision of licences and concessions, with contracts for public works, roads, bridges and land reclamation.[1] Government contracts always seemed to go to the mafioso, even though his tenders are usually the highest. While the mafia doctor gets all the patients and can always find a hospitl bed in a hurry, the mafia advocate usually has all the briefs he can handle, and his clients usually win their cases.[2]

Although the processes of 'mediation', 'protection' and control of the market have long been the traditional sources of income, it may now appear that these activities may no longer be able to afford the mafiosi sufficient income as in the past in the changing political, economic and industrial situation of the society. The evolution of the mafiosi into big corporate entrepreneurs can be explained in terms of the economic and social disintegration that has taken place in Italy during the 1970s, and which has acted as a catalyst for the accumulation of wealth for the mafiosi.[3] Their entry into industrial competition on a massive scale since the 1970s can be viewed as a form of diversification of economic operations similar to the techniques employed by the American syndicates which the authorities there consider as a form of

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1. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 169.

2. N. Lewis, The Honoured Society, op. cit.: 70.

3. P. Arlacchi, op. cit.

'infiltration' of legitimate business.[1] More important in the declining fortunes of the mafia has been the reassertion by the State of its legitimate authority in recent years. The trial of 475 accused mafiosi currently underway in Palermo and which is said to be the largest mafia trial in Italian history is expected by the government to mark a turning point in its long fight against the mafia.[2] Such a mass trial would probably not have been possible in the past decades when no informer from the mafia rank dared point his finger at the members of the organization, and when the Italian Parliament was dominated by its sympathizers.[3] How far the government will succeed in this latest war against the mafia remains to be seen, for in the past the mafiosi had usually been acquitted for 'lack of sufficient evidence'.[4]

As astute businessmen with their eyes always on the business that is most lucrative at any given period of time, the mafiosi in recent years appear to have shifted their operations more to drug trafficking and kidnappings which usually yield enormous profits for capital expansion -

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1. See, for instance, W.A. Moore, The Kefauver Committee and the Politics of Crime 1950-1952, Columbia, Missouri, 1974: IX, for a criticism of this view which has been articulated by Cressey and others; D.R. Cressey, Theft of the Nation, op. cit.

2. Associated Press: 'Security tight as Largest Mafia Trial Opens'. The Toronto Star, February 11, 1986: A3

3. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.; G. Servadio, op. cit.

4. N. Lewis, op. cit.

capital for the acquisition of commodities, machinery, buildings and labour. It is generally believed that the mafiosi from the Piana di Gioia who kidnapped Paul Getty Jr. used the multi-million lire ransom to buy the lorries needed to obtain the monopoly over the transportation of materials used in the construction of an industrial port.[1] Although this was one of such cases that received worldwide news coverage, there are thousands of others that ususally go unreported by the media every year.[2] Further accumulation of capital is often sought through trafficking in narcotics, arms, precious metals, and a whole range of illegal activities that tend to give mafiosi competitive advantage over their 'normal' competitors. Experts on drug trafficking believe that mafia's deep involvement in international narcotics began shortly after the last world war when Lucky Luciano was released from an American prison and deported to Sicily; that shortly afterwards he established a network of clandestine laboratories in Sicily, and that Sicily continues to be a major distributing centre of drugs originating from the Middle East and, more recently, from the Golden Triangle in Asia, whence they are piped to various European cities and

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1. P. Arlacchi, op. cit.,; G. Servadio, 'The Kidnapping Industry', Evening Standard' 5 July, 1974.

2. Traditionally, the feudal landowners and the middle class of Sicily had been left in peace - unless they had committed a sgarro, an offence. When their sons were kidnapped they were usually released unharmed by tacit agreement, without police interference. However, in recent years all cases of kidnappings appear to have been the sons of the really rich; see G. Servadio, op. cit.: 255.

North America.[1] For the mafioso, the accumulation of capital is not only necessary to carry out a wide range of economic activities, but it provides 'an avenue to power and social mobility'.[2]

Indeed, the sociological perspectives advanced by Sombart and Vablen in respect of the marginal groups' attachment to the pursuit of wealth may be equally germane in the case of the mafiosi and their counterparts in other societies. They advanced the view that a close link exists between the excluded members of society and their tendency to engage in entrepreneurism.[3] Just as the Jews, non-comformists and foreigners were able to profit from their marginal status in society during the early stages of capitalism, so it would appear that the same status and tendency has driven the mafiosi today to throw everything into the all-out pursuit of maximum profit. In so far as they view themselves as 'excluded' members of society, the

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1. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics in the U.S. has consistently argued that much of the narcotics entering the U.S. could be traced to Sicilians who sit astride the trade routes from Eastern Mediterranean sources, and that it is the work of a secret organization, the Mafia, which possesses considerable influence in local affairs in Sicily; see D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 187; Alfred W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin, op. cit.: 24-25; see also Harry J. Anslinger, The Murderers, New York, 1961; Ed Reid, Mafia: Cosa Nostra Syndicate, New York, 1964: chapter 7.

2. For an analysis of organized crime as a queer ladder of social mobility, see D. Bell, The End of Ideology, New York, 1967: 129. It has been said that credit concessions from banks to notorious mafiosi have been used to finance, directly or indirectly, illicit trade and traffic with frightening social cost for society as a whole; G. Servadio, op. cit.: 216.

3. Warner Sombart, The Jews and Modern Capitalism, Illinois, 1951: 169-190; T. Veblen, The Theory of Leisure Class, London, 1925: 188-211.

pursuit of wealth appears to assume a much greater significance than for other social groupings, capital and its accumulation representing the sole avenue to the acquisition of power and honour.[1]

Today, however, the mafia is no longer just an instrument for defending other people's interests, but a political and economic institution like the banks, trade unionism and religion, and its goal is the quick accumulation of wealth and power in a land of widespread poverty.[2] No one would argue that the mafia was imposed upon the Sicilian society, but rather it was brought about by the process which the economic and political development took in Sicily, and in which Sicilians found themselves victims of their own making. Whereas it used to be concerned with the organized exploitation of agriculture and cattle breeding, it has expanded its activities into such areas as graft and bribery in the business of regional offices and financial institutions, in the drawing up of building contracts, the organization of international drug traffick and smuggling, the control of urban rackets, and the conquest of political power.[3] It has apparently none of the characteristics

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1. Arlacchi, op. cit.: 68; D. Bell, op. cit.: 141-146; A. Block, East Side-West Side: Organizing Crime in New York 1930-1950, op. cit.: 239.

2. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 231.

3. J. and P. Schneider, op. cit.: 184; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 170-171, 231-232.

generally attributed to it in popular and clandestine literature: a national or supreme head in Palermo, a rigidly defined hierarchy of positions, specific rules and rituals, and so on.[1] Nor is it a centralized organization, as has often been claimed.[2]

Despite its use of unlicensed violence, it can be argued that the mafia could not have assumed its present form in Sicily in the absence of free market for labour and goods, the institution of a universal suffrage and electoral politics, all of which, with the exception of universal suffrage, are features of democratic capitalist societies. It is clear that it is only in such societies, in the absence of countervailing factors, that the mafia and similar brands of organized crime can find a foothold on a permanent basis. In the next chapter we shall examine the development and evolution of a parallel and almost identical but distinct brand of organized crime across the Atlantic which has been popularly but wrongly identified as 'the Mafia.

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1. C. Mori, op. cit.: 39-40.

2. Rather than being a centralized organization with one supreme head, the Mafia structure is known to consist of a cosca (plural cosche), which is an individual group of mafiosi or a group of 'friend-of- friends'. All the cosche engaged in identical enterprises often join in an alliance called consorteria. All the consorterie in Sicily are said to constitute the Mafia phenomenon known to its members as the Onorata Societa; G. Schiavo, op. cit.: 52; A. Blok, Mafia of a Sicilian Village, op. cit.: 137; H. Hess, op. cit.: 75-81.

Conclusion

The Sicilian mafia has been defined in various ways and researchers are still trying to come to grips with the phenomenon conceptually, empirically, and as a social problem. No one even can say with absolute certainty how and from where the word 'mafia' originated,[1] which has now been employed in a variety of senses. It is said to have resulted from an intricate history of injustice, from unlawful practice of the law, from many years of misgovernment and mismanagement, and overbearing despotism of colonial rule in which Sicilians developed widespread mistrust and hostility toward all State organs and opted for an informal system of self-help institutions to solve their problems. The mafia can be traced to a situation in which the weak, modern state superimposed itself on a marginal peasant society which was still largely feudal in its basic features, and where the State failed to monopolize the use of physical force in large areas of western Sicily. Essentially, the mafia is believed to have evolved in Sicily out of the tensions between the central government and local landowners on the one hand, and between the latter and the tenant peasants on the other, thus creating the role of a middle man and power broker who

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1. For the various theories regarding the origin of the word 'mafia', see, among others, J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 91-106; N. Lewis, op. cit.: 23; Ed Reid, The Grim Reapers: the Anatomy of Organized Crime in America, Chicago, 1969: 3-4; H. Hess, op. cit.: 3; F.A. Ianni with E. Reuss-Ianni, A Family Business, New York, 1972: 25; and A. Bequai, op. cit.12-16.

provided a specific code through which members of the various social class and groups arranged and rearranged themselves in a new 'modus vivendi'. Mafia's operations in Sicily and its existence hitherto have apparently been made possible through its symbiotic accommodation with its powerful masters in strategic postions in the society and who compose its network. Whereas initially the mafia used to be concerned with the organized exploitation of agriculture and cattle breeding, it has switched into such activities as graft and bribery in the drawing up of building contracts, in the business of regional offices and financial institutions, the organization of international smuggling, the control of urban markets and the conquest of political power. The mafia has attained such economic and political power in Sicily that it can today be justifiably described as a political and economic institution. The mafia in the Sicilian context can best be viewed as a result of class struggle, and it is hard to reject a Marxist vision of history in dealing with this phenomenon, as the social development is the result of economic causes. The history of the mafia in Sicily can best be described sociologically as one of continuing conflict, cooperation, and accomodation in which the mafiosi have invariably allied themselves with the power structure to maintain the status quo. On the basis of mafia's entrenched position in Sicily, one can argue that only a successful socialist revolution, coupled with radical economic rearrangements, can eliminate its existence.

CHAPTER 3: ORGANIZED CRIME IN AMERICA

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ORGANIZED CRIME IN AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

In our study of the evolution of the mafia phenomenon in Sicily, we saw that certain political and economic conditions not only facilitated its final emergence but also have served to maintain and sustain its long existence in that country. We suggested that organized crime can be viewed as a particular kind of seed which can thrive only if it finds the right soil and climate conducive to its growth.

In this chapter, we shall attempt to explore the hows and whys organized crime in the United States has persisted for many generations through all the vicissitudes of internal and inter-syndicate conflicts, has survived many committees of enquiry, and has continued to flourish in the face of massive law-enforcement mobilizations. Most contemporary theories of organized crime in America are usually framed in terms of the 'mafia' phenomenon and often view the first as being synonomous with the second. This analysis, which is based on the assumption that organized crime in America is probably imported from abroad and is the work of one particular ethnic group,has for many years served to mask the role which the 'respectable' members of the society, as in the case of Sicily, have played in sustaining the existence of organized crime in the country. Just as the existence of the mafia is intertwined with the Sicilian society, the existence of the crime syndicates in America should be sought in the characteristics of that society.

More specifically, the chapter examines the matrix of organized crime in America, the application of the 'mafia' label in the country, 'mafia' and 'organized crime' as two distinct, separate entities, characteristics of the activities of American syndicates, the role of the 'respectable' members of the society, the composition of the crime networks in America, organized crime as servant to the power structure: its symbiosis with politicians, law enforcers and union leaders; how it has served as an alternative route to wealth and power, possible future successors to the 'throne' of organized crime in the country. It argues that organized crime is as characteristic of capitalism as bureaucracy is characteristic of the modern state.

Its Genesis

In examining the phenomenon of organized crime in the United States and elsewhere, we should like to preface our remarks by observing that virtually any country is capable of developing the phenomenon at any point in time, if the necessary conditions prevail at the time; however, when it persists over decades of years, one must look for the explanation in the historical and cultural context of the society, as well as the nature of its political economy. Just as the mafist spirit nurtured over many decades eventually contributed to the development of organized crime in Sicily in the form of the mafia, so too there were and still are certain specific forces which have made possible the development of organized crime in the United States.

It is noted that right from its foundation the United States has manifested symptoms of a lawless society in which a class of professional criminals and organized gangs[1] took the law into their hands in the name of inalienable rights.[2] Despite the complexity of the society, American

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1. For the activities of various criminal gangs in the United States before the turn of the century and shortly after, see Herbert Asbury, The Gangs of New York: An Informal History of the Underworld, New York, 1927; idem, The Barbary Coast: An Informal History of the San Francisco Underworld, London, 1937; idem, The French Quarter: An Informal History of New Orleans Underworld, New York, 1938, idem The Underworld of Chicago: An Informal History of the Chicago Underworld, London, 1941.

2. Even during its colonial period, the colonists were known to obey such laws as they approved individually and usually evaded unwelcome regulations that interfered with their convenience or profit and always insisted that acts of Parliament which went contrary to their 'inalienable rights' were void; see, Gus Tyler, 'The Roots of Organized Crime', Crime and Delinquency, volume 8 (October 1962): 235-338.

law-makers, unlike their counterparts in other countries, have more often resorted to criminal law as an effective means of regulating behaviour and forbidding satisfactions which are in wide demand - acts which in simpler societies are more effectively controlled through mores and public opinion.[1] This attitude, however has not usually resulted in better observance of the law; on the contrary, it has predictably led to more violations of it. As Adams notes, 'any law that goes counter to the strong feelings of a large part of the population is bound to be disobeyed in America'[2]. It may be easy to explain the origins of the development of organized crime in America in terms of the effects of the Prohibition, criminal immigrants to the new world, the two World Wars, or the economic depression of the thirties, all of which may have caused enormous widespread social disorders resulting in group criminality. These events, however, constitute an insufficient account because organized crime in America is not a child of institutions or events which Americans would normally view as 'evil' but, on the contrary, it is believed to have developed from such forces and events which they would proudly proclaim as essentially 'noble'.[3]

Even though Prohibition served to streamline syndicated activities, it apparently did not start the cartelization of crime, contrary to popular belief; nor did organized crime in

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1. D.R. Taft and R.W. England Jr., Criminology, 4th ed. New York, 1964: 23.

2. James T. Adams, Our Business Civilization, London, 1929: 101.

3. G. Tyler, op. cit.

America originate from the wave of immigration, or the often-publicized 'mafia' which was supposed to have been imported from abroad.[1] Adams rightly dismissed these arguments which tended to place the blame on the foreigners. He notes that the Eighteenth Amendment (which ushered in Prohibition) was operating upon a population which was already the most lawless in spirit of any in the great modern civilized countries.[2] In his view, "lawlessness has been and remains one of the most distinctive American traits....It is impossible to blame the situation on the foreigners. The overwhelming mass of them were law-abiding in their native lands. If they become lawless here it must be largely due to the American atmosphere and conditions."[3]

One of the critical factors which has sustained the existence of organized crime in the United States and which is not readily evident in other capitalist democracies is the insipid 'alliance' or symbiotic accommodation between organized criminals and holders of official power, Sicily being an exception. This 'entente cordiale' which has been the subject of enquiry by several special committees and commissions of the Senate, as in the case of Italy, has long

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1. For the anthropological controversy and argument about 'diffusion versus independent invention' see, among others, Melville J. Herskovitz, Man and His Works, New York, 1956.

2. J.T. Adams, op. cit.

3. ibid.

presented an insoluble dilemma to the American society.[1] In a society in which there is faith in law without expecting or approving obedience to all laws, it would not be suprising that the more intelligent criminals hardly distinguish themselves from non-criminals as law-breakers in a society of law-keepers.[2] This kind of individualistic bias toward the law often presents a contradictory stance in a society that for treating social problems. As Schlesinger observes in this regard, 'for from taking the law into one's hands when it could not function, it was but a step to taking the law into one's hands when it did not function as one wanted it to.'[3] It is generally acknowledged that the institution of Prohibition in 1920 in America was as a result of the influence of its puritanical ethics which originated with the early settlers and which continues to colour its moral codes long after the minorities ceased to practise such ethics. The exponents of Prohibition apparently sought to justify its institution by linking drink with alien influence, racial degeneracy and bolshevism.[4]

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1. See, for instance, The Wickersham Commission Report of 1931 on the enforcement of Prohibition in New York; The Kefauver Committee: Senate Special Committee to investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, 81st Congress, First, Second and Third Interim Reports, 1950-1951; The McClellan Committee: Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labour or Management Field, 85th Congress, second session, Hearings, Parts 1-58: First and Second Interim Reports, Washington, D.C. 1958-1963.

2. D.R. Taft and R.W. England, op. cit.: 31.

3. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Paths to the Present, New York, 1949: 15.

4. Andrew Sinclair, Prohibition: Era of Excess, London, 1965: 107.

For a nation that believes in the accumulation of wealth as an end itself, a puritan heritage, superimposed on a materialistic culture, would only create a widespread hypocrisy in which Americans collectively outlawed the goods in which they privately relish. In the ensuing inner clash of values, organized criminals saw the opportunity to provide the 'outlawed' goods and services that were in great demand by the 'respectable' members of the society.[1]

It would appear that a lawless heritage by its very nature is incompatible with an ethical principle bent on forbidding and restraining individual expressions of basic instincts and appetites; the resulting contradiction was even obvious in the activities of the early Puritans to the new world. As Adams notes, 'the foundation of the strongest of the puritan colonies was tainted with illegality from the start.'[2] Despite the practice of this 'noble' ethic, it is common knowledge that the foundation of many a distinguished older American fortune was laid by sharp practices and morally reprehensible methods involving shady speculations and a not inconsiderable amount of violence.[3] They often ignored, circumvented, or stretched the law when it stood in their way, or were themselves the law when it served their purposes. This has not prevented them and their descendants from feeling proper moral outrage when, under the changed

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1. G. Tyler, op. cit.: 333.

2. James T. Adams, 'Our Lawless Heritage' Atlantic Monthly, December 1928.

3. Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties, New York, 1968: 148.

circumstances of the crowded urban environments, latecomers pursued equally ruthless tactics.[1] It has been a tactic well suited to the operation of criminal syndicates. There may be some truth in Max Lerner's observation that moral indignation is a peculiar fact of middle-class psychology and represents a disguised form of repressed envy.[2]

Bell appropriately points out that Catholic cultures have rarely imposed such restrictions and have rarely suffered such excesses. 'Even in Anglican England, prostitution is a commonplace of Piccadilly night life, and gambling one of the largest and most popular industries.'[3] The paradox of restricting and relishing in common vices like gambling[4] and prostitution perhaps lies in the fact that Americans have traditionally had an extra-ordinary talent for compromise in politics and extremism in morality. In fact, crime as a growing business was fed by the revenues from prostitution, liquor and gambling that a wide-open urban society encouraged and which a middle-class Protestant ethos tried to suppress with a ferocity unmatched in any other civilized country.[5] Efforts to legislate human appetites in any society have often produced unintended consequences; the American efforts to suppress 'immorality' by legislation only provided the seed bed out of which organized crime has grown. As Tyler observes, 'Our puritanism creates a whole range of illegal

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1. ibid.

2. Max Lerner, America as a Civilization, London, 1958: 664.

3. D. Bell, 'Crime as an American Way of Life', The Antioch Review, volume 13 (June 1953): 131-154 at 132.

4. For an overview of gambling in general and reasons why people gamble, see Edmund Bergler, The Psychology of Gambling, New York, 1957; Herbert Bloch, 'The Sociology of Gambling', The American Journal of Sociology, 57, November, 1951.

5. D. Bell, op. cit.

commodities and services, for which there is a widespread demand.[1] Into the gap between what people want and what they can legally get leaps the underworld as purveyor and pimp with gaming tables, narcotics, and women. In this way puritanism appears to give the underworld a monopoly on a market with an almost insatiable demand.[2]

The main goal of organized criminals is no different from that of 'respectable' society: the pursuit and achievement of wealth and power; a society that is oriented toward this goal would naturally be an ideal haven for their activities. The pursuit of material wealth as an end itself was apparently institutionalized in America by generations of 'robber barons' whose unethical methods were rationalized as expedient and which successive generations have sought to emulate.[3] For an average American, rights and riches are the Eldorado; together they constitute the American Dream. It is a dream, however, attainable by those who have what it takes to compete successfully, while the disadvantaged are always lost in the struggle. As Lerner notes, 'since such people feel at a strategic disadvantage in the competition of life, they feel justified in ignoring the usual inhibitions and in tearing down the accepted cement of social relations.'[4] Such disadvantaged individuals have seen how

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1. For instance, this was the case when the consumption of alcohol was prohibited by law in January 1920; Andrew Sinclair; Prohibition: Era of Excess, London, 1965: 238.

2. Gus Tyler, (ed.) Organized Crime in America: A Book of Readings, Ann Arbor, 1962:48.

3. See M. Josephson, The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists, New York, 1934; T. Brewer, The Robber Barons: Saints and Sinners?, New York, 1976.

4. M. Lerner, op. cit.

easy money could be made and predacity practised; how the rules of the game are constantly broken and the odds stacked against the little 'guy'; they apparently realize there is an internal violence in the act of exploiting the market, and that in America organized illegality can serve as a tool of social ascent.[1]

When one digs through the social and economic history of America, one would find that the ruthless and illegal methods adopted by the early captains of industries in their pursuit of wealth are very similar to those which have been utilized by modern syndicates in alliance with official power holders in pursuit of the same goal. It is a history that drips with the sordid account of men and their shady land grants acquired by bribing colonial legislatures; of capital amassed in tripartite deals among governors, pirates and brokers; of fortunes piled up along side the drunk and dead bodies of native Indians; of small settlers who were driven from their land or turned into tenants by big ranchers employ- ing bandits, rustlers, guns - and the law; of railroad builders who used extortion, blackmail, bribery, violence, cannons and private armies to wreck their competitors and to become the sole boss of the trade.[2] Incidentally, these men were considered as 'enterprising capitalists' by the moral temper of their time. In time, however, they became the very models of a modern major gentleman, writing laws and appointing law-enforcers to establish legal dominion over their illegally won gains. Very few of the robber barons actually had any other

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1. D. Bell, op. cit.: 133.

2. G. Tyler, op. cit.: 330.

origin,[1] thereby establishing it as a precedent that compliance with the law is subordinate to the pursuit of property.[2]

As financial success was accepted in America as the highest achievement, it was not until the twentieth century did any religious leader venture to advance the un-American doctrine that ill-gotten wealth was 'tainted money', even when devoted to benevolent uses.[3] Not only were these early buccaneers viewed as heroes rather than villains, their social acceptance has tended to dilute the social stigma that would normally be attached to ill-gotten wealth in other societies. As Lloyd deplores this attitude in America, 'it is an adjudicated fact of the business and social life of America that to receive the profits of crime and cherish the agents who commit it does not disqualify (one) for fellowship in the 'most solid' circles - financial, commercial, religious, or social. It illustrates what Ruskin calls the morbid character of modern business that the history of its most brilliant episodes must be studied in the vestibules of the penitentiary...Property to the extent of uncounted millions has been changed from the possession of the many who owned it to the few who hold it...'[4]

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1. See P. Jones, The Robber Baron Revisted, Boston, 1968.

2. G. Tyler, op. cit.

3. D. Bell, op. cit.

3. Henry D. Lloyd, Wealth Against Commonwealth, New York, 1894: 512.

It was clear to perceptive observers like Lloyd that if their civilization would be destroyed, it would not be by barbarians from below but by the plutocrats from above.[1] The foundation of business ethics thus laid by these plutocrats has become a blueprint for successive generations with its attendant results. Viewed against this background, the urban rackets in America - the illicit activity organized for continuing profits is probably a prototype of the activities of the early captains of American industries.[2]

Until the turn of the century, America has always had frontiers; though the open frontiers have all disappeared the spirit and influence they fostered has continued to linger on and make Americans look on the criminal as a modern Robin Hood. The spirit of open frontier, as it is portrayed by movies and television depicting the eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil, has often given rise to subcultures where law and order came to represent a foreign enemy; it enjoins one to 'grab what you can, hold what you can, and live the outlaw'.[3] It is believed that it was out of this inner frontier that the great, violent, antisocial gangs arose who were to become the direct ancestors of modern 'Crime Incorporated';[4] that the juvenile troops emerged to

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1. ibid.

2. G. Tyler, Organized Crime in America, op. cit.: 93.

3. G. Tyler, Crime and Delinquency, op. cit.: 333.

4. B. Turkus and Sid Feder, Murder, Inc.: The Story of the Syndicate, London, 1953.

replace the aging gangs, the cadets of organized criminality.[1]

Violence or the threat of it has been one of the weapons in the arsenal of organized criminals of which American society generates a great deal. The violence so generated tends to condition the national mentality, often expressing itself in repetitive acts of rebellion which find their legitimacy in the struggle for 'rights'.[2] Violence and disrespect for the law usually go together, with the latter often generating the former. Finally, it cannot be said that the scientific perspective which views the criminal as a product of society is yet dominant in the United States. Particularly lacking is the recognition that crime is chiefly a group rather than an individual phenomenon and that crime is basically implicit in the nature of American society and in many of its cultural values.[3] The main stream perspectives of American sociology are overwhelmingly reformist in orientation, normally support the status quo, and usually view the social structure as basically sound;[4] They have rarely called for wholesale political and economic changes that could redistribute wealth.[5] The main stream

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1. G. Tyler, Organized Crime in America, op. cit.: 47.

2. A.M. Schlesinger, Paths To the Present, op. cit.: 15.

3. D.R. Taft and R.W. England, op. cit.: 30.

4. See, for instance, Talcott Parsons, The Social System, Glencoe, Illinois, 1951; idem Essays in Sociological Theory, Pure and Applied, Glencoe, Illinois, 1949, among others.

5. D.C. Gibbons, The Criminological Enterprise: Theories and Perspectives, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1979: 132-136.

of American sociology is replete with such terms as 'balance', 'harmony', 'equilibrium', 'adjustment', 'maladjustment', 'accommodation', 'function', 'disorganization', 'social progress', and 'cultural lag'.[1] As Myrdal has pointed out, while these terms have been used to describe empirically observable situations, they carry within them static and fatalistic valuation hidden in the ethos of social science and they tend to emphasize the 'do-nothing' (laissez-faire) approach to these situations.[2] In its liberal orientation, structural functionalism of academic sociology ' ' usually views criminogenic influences which produce criminality as eclectic, extremely pervasive, and intimately bound up with the core institutions of modern society so that no one single factor can be held as the chief villain. Apparently Sutherland thought along these lines in his efforts to abstract an explanation of criminal etiology, 'I reached the general conclusion that a concrete condition cannot be a cause of crime....'[3] It emphasizes the systemic character of society whose needs must be met if the needs of the members are to be met.[4] At the same time the overwhelming emphasis which the society has placed upon the acquisition of wealth as an end in itself and a

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1. See, for instance, T. Parson, The Social System, New York, 1977; R.E. Park and Ernest N. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology, Chicago, 1969; W.F. Ogburn, 'Man and his Institutions', Publications of the American Sociological Society, (August 1935): 39-40; E.B. Reuter, 'Competition and Racial Division of Labour', in E.T. Thompson (ed.), Race Relations and the Race Problem:A Definition and Analysis, Durham: Duke University, 1939: 46-47; C. Shaw, H.D. Mckay, F. Zorbaugh, and L.S. Cottrell, Delinquency Areas, Chicago, 1929.

2. Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, volume 11, New York, 1962: 1055; Stanford M. Lyman, The Black American in Sociological Thought, New York, 1972: 105.

3. E.H. Sutherland, 'Development of the Theory' in A. Cohen et al, Sutherland Papers, Bloomington, Indiana, 1959: 19.

4. W.J. Chambliss (ed.), Sociological readings in the Conflict Perspective, Reading, Mass., 1973: 4.

measure of success would only induce some people to adopt any method possible to achieve this esteemed goal. Although it can be argued that these characteristics of American society did not themselves cause organized crime in the country, there is abundant evidence that they have served as catalysts and axis on which the phenomenon has revolved over the years.[1]

In recent years, however, organized crime in North America has become synonymous with the word 'mafia' partly because of the appearance of ethnic Italians in the historical succession in the American underworld,[2] and partly because of the fact that organized crime is a kind of an orphan that no nation would be proud to claim. The term also appears to fit in well with the belief widely shared in America, though erroneously, that organized crime in the country was probably imported from abroad. As Bell insightfully notes, it is a belief that suits the American temper and feeling that 'somewhere', 'somebody' is pulling all the complicated strings to which this jumbled world dances.[3] Today, it is difficult to find an author or a news commentator on organized crime who does not leave the impression that the members of the 'mafia' have a virtual

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1. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, op. cit.: 127-150; 175-209; G. Tyler, Organized Crime in America, op. cit.

2. A process by which one ethnic group used organized crime to achieve wealth and power and then faded into respectability, as its place is taken over by another ethnic group; D. Bell, op. cit.: 129.

3. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, op. cit.: 140-141.

monopoly on organized crime in the country. Tyler has cautioned against the impression this attitude creates when he observed that 'while lurid journalism has made "organized crime" and "mafia" synonymous, this is a dangerous distortion of both the origin and nature of the underworld.' Organized crime in America, he maintains, is not an import, "Made in Sicily", it is American, risen out of a native matrix of lawlessness, different but not dissimilar from that of Sicily. 'The Underworld,' he concludes, ' is not an Italian organization, but a vast syndicate of many ethnic and native groups.'[1]

A brief examination of the literature would indicate that the 'mafia' was never the author of organized crime in America, that its use in recent years as the 'dominant' and controlling factor in organized crime in the country is due to a variety of reasons: the convenience and popularity of the term itself as a criminal label;[2] a casuality in the political struggle to find outside scapegoats responsible for America's organized crime problems, and the historic rise of ethnic Italians during the Prohibition period and its effects thereafter.[3] There is, however, a dichotomy of perspective on this issue; there is the conventional view that views organized crime and 'mafia' as synonymous;[4] then the view

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1. G. Tyler, Organized Crime in America, op. cit.: 336.

2. D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 6-7.

3. D. Bell, op. cit.

4. See, for instance, J. Allen, Merchants of Menace - The Mafia: A Study of Organized Crime, Springfield, Illinois, 1962; R. Salerno and J.S. Tompkins, The Crime Confederation, New York, 1969, among others.

that maintains that organized crime and the mafia are two distinct entities, or, at least, the latter is a sub-species of the former.[1] In our view, the use of the 'mafia' label in the U.S. is a misapplied one, especially when it is intended to replace the term 'organized crime', for the latter has existed in the U.S. long before the former was invented. Such an application of the label can only create obstacles and distortions in understanding the nature of organized crime in America.

Examination of Literature

It is difficult today to find any book on organized crime published in North America which does not include in its title the word 'Mafia' or similar terms suggestive of 'family', 'godfather', 'brotherhood', 'violence' and the like.[2] To the uninformed majority in the continent, the

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1. D.C. Smith, op. cit.; D. Bell, op. cit. G. Tyler, op. cit.; J.L. Albini, The American Mafia: Genesis of a Legend, New York, 1979.

2. In the forties there was an effort to substitute 'Unione Siciliana'; in the early sixties the Oyster Bay Conference of New York State suggested the term 'Confederation'; during the same period Joseph Valachi testified before the McClellan Committee and insisted that their organization is called 'La Cosa Nostra' rather than the 'Mafia'. Although some writers toyed with 'Cosa Nostra' for a while as an alternate label, none of these terms took hold; see Edward J. Allen, Merchants of Menace - The Mafia: A Study of Organized Crime, Springfield, Illinois, 1962; Frederic Sondeon, Jr., Brotherhood of Evil: The Mafia, New York, 1959; Ralph Salerno and J.S. Tompkins, The Crime Confederation: Cosa Nostra and Allied Operations in Organized Crime, New York, 1969, among others.

word 'mafia' is basically synonymous with the term 'organized crime'. Other terms which have been suggested in the past - Unione Siciliana, Cosa Nostra, Confederation, Black Hand, etc. - for the characterization of organized crime in America[1] have never taken hold with the public because they lack the sense of history that gives strength to 'mafia', particularly to those searching for deep-rooted conspiracies, but more importantly because they are too long. The popularity of the term among headline writers appears to lie mainly in its power of identification and its commercial appeal.[2] As Kempton notes, 'the good scores are made not by belonging to but by exposing the 'Mafia'.[3]

The persistence of the 'mafia' label over the other terms clearly underlines the reality of the threat which the 'organization' in question is supposed to pose and which the other terms do not convey. As Smith humourously states the situation, "We call them 'Mafias' because the name already has threatening connotations. In doing so, we are like superstitious natives who adopt an attitude of bravado by using the devil's name with impunity and simultaneously create a sense of familiarity that reduces his threat."[4]

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1. H.S. Nelli, The Business of Crime: Italians and Syndicate Crime in the U.S., New York, 1976: 199, 208; Combatting Organized Crime: A Report of the Oyster Bay New York Conference on Organized Crime, Office of the Governor's Counsel, Albany, New York, 1965; The McClellan Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labour or Management Field, 85th Congress, second session, Hearings, Parts 1-58.

2. D.C. Smith, The Mafia Mystique, New York, 1975: 7-8.

3. Murray Kempton, 'Cosa Nostra: That's Italian for Our Headache', Playboy, volume 17 (December 1970): 193-194.

4. D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 5.

More importantly, the popularity of the 'mafia' label in America should be seen in terms of what it stands for: ethnicity and violence - and thus can be considered a foreign behaviour pattern that is supposed to be 'un-American' in origin. This view does allow the public to speak of the 'black Mafia' or the 'Hispanic Mafia' as potential successor groups to today's leaders in organized crime in America.[1] But today's keen observers believe that new groups are in the process of taking over the major areas of criminal endeavour from Italian Americans to which the mafia label applies naturally.[2] But even with the new ethnic succession, one wonders why the name 'mafia' continues to dominate the characterization of organized criminal activities in North America.

Perhaps a partial answer would lie with the post-war conspiracy theories which argue that a nationwide confederation superseded old rivalries and thus the new name (Mafia) has come to signify a superorganization of crime.[3] But the apparent absence of a similar umbrella organization among the new ethnics would certainly make the term inapplicable for the future; however, the name persists.

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1. In view of Ianni's concern over the perpetuation of the 'Mafia' label, it is rather astonishing that his recently published study of ethnic succession in emerging criminal networks has been given the title of 'Black Mafia'. We think the reason is most probably commercial; F.A. Ianni, Black Mafia, New York, 1974.

2. ibid; D. Bell, 'Crime as an American Way of Life', The Antioch Review, op. cit.

3. Ralph Salerno, The Crime Confederation, op. cit.

A simple explanation would probably be that the arenas of commercialized vice and racketeering in which the process of succession can be observed still have an Italian cast in them, and thus it is only a matter of logic to continue using the label. When applied to new criminal groups, however, 'mafia' appears to perform two basic functions: it supplies an easily identified criminal label for one group, while perpetuating the criminal identification of another.[1] As Ianni notes, "What remains to be seen is whether the spectre of the 'Mafia' - the image of a nationwide conspiracy to control all organized crime and to subvert legitimate business and professional life - will die out..., for the notion is a haunting one."[2] If the present trend is any indication of the future, one can conveniently predict that the label will remain in use as long as organized crime continues to exist in North America.

The use of the term 'mafia' by a majority of the people in North America when speaking of organized crime often ignores the historical fact that the two terms began as separate conceptual entities, and that the latter does not need the former for its survival. As sociological evidence would indicate, when Frederick Thrasher wrote on the subject of organized crime in 1927, he had a non-mafia concept in mind and he viewed organized crime as 'an area of life and

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1. D.C. Smith, op. cit.

2. F.A. Ianni, A Family Business, New York, 1972.

activity characterized by the absence of ordinary conventions'.[1] Similarly, Landesco approached the subject in non-mafia terms and viewed it as the manner in which cooperative arrangements of 'good citizens', which are characterized as business enterprises, are mirrored in the environment of the gangster.[2] These concepts are fundamentally different from the majority view in America which today conceives organized crime in terms of ethnicity, alien conspiracy, and the 'mafia'.[3] It should be recalled that as early as 1830s organized underworld activities were taking place in such large cities as Chicago and New York by criminal syndicates who were mainly Anglo-Irish immigrants and native whites and who dominated gambling and prostitution in those cities.[4]

It is believed that the first mention of the 'mafia' in the American media was in connection with the assassination

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1. F.M. Thrasher, The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago, Chicago, 1963.

2. J. Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago: Part Three of the Illinois Crime Survey 1929, Chicago, 1968, In the introduction to the book, Mark Haller praised Landesco's work as 'standing alone as a scholarly attempt to understand the social roots of organized crime in an American city and the gangster's ties with many segments of conventional society.' ibid: IX.

3. See, for instance, Ed Reid, Mafia: Cosa Nostra-Syndicate, New York, 1964; Frederic Sondern, op. cit.; Edward Allen, op. cit.; D.R. Cressey, Theft of the Nation, New York, 1969; A. Bequai, Organized Crime: The Fifth Estate, Lexington, mass., 1979, among others.

4. H. Asbury, The Gangs of New York, op. cit.; idem, The Underworld of Chicago: An Informal History of the Chicago Underworld, London, 1941; J.L. Albini, The American Mafia: Genesis of a Legend, New York, 1979: 177-200.

of the New Orleans Police Chief, David Hennessey.[1] Because the existence of the mafia in Sicily was known at the time in America it seemed logical to some people that, if there was a mafia, some of its members might have been included in the mass of immigrants entering the U.S. from southern Italy in the 1880s.[2] It was therefore generally assumed that it was these Italian 'mafias' who perpetrated Hennessey's murder, but the jury thought otherwise.[3] The lynching of the men in prison accused of Hennessey's murder and the rapid disappearance of concern for the 'Mafia' after the lynching would suggest, in retrospect, that the real issue was not a threatening secret society but widespread concern over Italian immigration, fueled by a history of Native Americanism, and economic and political rivalries. Under the circumstances, then, once an Italian connection was introduced into the case, a 'Mafia' explantion was inevitable, regardless of the real course of events. Even though the activities of the underworld reached a new peak in America in the Roaring twenties and early thirties,[4]

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1. D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 32; H.S. Nelli, The Business of Crime, New York, 1976.

2. D.C. Smith, op. cit.

3. For a full treatment of this incident, see H. Asbury, The French Quarters, op. cit.; G. Schiavo, The Truth About the Mafia and Organized Crime in America, El Paso, Texas, 1962: 146; H.S. Nelli, op. cit.: 47-66.

4. For the activities of the early captains of the gambling industry and labour 'managers', see D. Bell, op. cit.

the industrial racketeers, gamblers and bootleggers of the period were known simply as gangsters, mobsters, and at times syndicates.[1] One may assume that the 'mafia' perhaps went underground during this period, but such assumption would fly in the face of the bloody, open gang warfares that marked the Prohibition period.[2] It would appear, however, that the application of the mafia label is largely dependent upon the willingness of the media and the public not to apply it at times or to apply it selectively to particular phenomena. Thus between 1915 and 1945 the label virtually disappeared and some writers have attempted to explain this disappearance in terms of the extent to which the gangster was truly American which could not support a pejorative label.[3]

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1. Books describing the activities of the underworld during the Prohibition era hardly used the term 'mafia', see, for instance, Edward D. Sullivan, Chicago Surrenders, New York, 1930; idem, Rattling the Cup on Chicago Crime, New York, 1929; J. Landesco, op. cit.; F. Thrasher, op. cit.; E.D. Sullivan, Look at Chicago, London; 1930; H. Asbury, Gem of the Prairie, Garden City, New York, 1942, etc.

2. For an account of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in Chicago in which Capone's gang mowed down members of a rival gang, see Kenneth Allsop, The Bootleggers and Their Era, Garden City, New York, 1961: 137-48.

3. Katherine Gerould has perceptively dealt with this theme of 'Americanism' in her article, 'Jessica and Al Capone'. In her effort to understand why the villain should appear as hero to an eleven-year old Jessica, Gerould pointed to two characteristics: honesty and efficiency which Capone personified. Capone made no bones about what he did. It was his efficiency that mattered more. 'A successful monopolist commands (our) attention, whether it is in manufacturing or racketeering', she writes; K.F. Gerould, 'Jessica and Al Capone'. Harper's Magazine, volume 163, 1931: 93-97.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the founders of 'Murder Incorporated' in Brooklyn, New York, in the 1940s were simply known as syndicates; the pejorative 'mafia' label apparently could not be applied here because Lepke Buchalter and several of his associates were Jewish.[1] Added to this was the fact that Prohibition did serve to blur or virtually remove the distinction between law respecter and law breaker, and the symbiotic relationship that emerged between gangster and patron obviously blocked the normal application of criminal labels. In the circumstance, the Prohibitionists apparently became the scapegoats, not the bootleggers, and this circumstance alone might explain some instinctive reluctance to apply the 'mafia' label.[2] It was not until the beginning of the 1950s that the 'mafia' label which surfaced briefly following the assassination of Hennessey reappeared once more.

Reappearance of the 'Mafia' in America

The first reemergence of the 'Mafia' on the national scene was a product of the Kefauver Committee hearings of 1950-1951. The process of reviving the 'mafia' label

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1. For the activities of this group of death-bound assassins, the execution of Lepke Buchalter, and the prosecution and conviction of other members, see B. Turkus and Sid Feder, Murder Inc.: The Story of the Syndicate, London, 1952.

2. D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 88.

required basically two roles: the persons willing to make certain charges and those who would listen to them. The latter role was filled by legislative committees that really had other concerns, while the former role continues to be filled by the agents of the Federal Narcotics Bureau which needs a 'mafia' as its drawing card in the competition with other law enforcement agencies for federal budget support.[1] The existence of the 'Mafia' as a "supercriminal" organization in the U.S. has always served as an excuse for the Bureau's failure to halt the importation of narcotics into the country. The Kefauver Committee which was created to investigate organized crime in interstate commerce apparently began its investigations not entirely divested of preconceived notions as to what it expected to find. After visiting fourteen cities and holding hearings, it declared that "there is a nationwide, sinister criminal organization known as the 'Mafia' operating throughout the country, with ties in other nations."[2] The use of the name 'mafia' in this way unwittingly conveys the impression that organized crime in America is dominated by Italian-Americans and a so-called monolithic organization. The committee pointed to

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1. Alfred R. Lindesmith, The Addict and the Law, Bloomington, Indiana, 1965, This was one of the early attempts to provide such an analysis. See also David Musto, The American Disease: origins of Narcotic Control, New Haven, Conn., 1973.

2. The Kefauver Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce, op. cit.; see also Alfred W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, New York, 1972: 15-29.

bookmaking and slot machines as evidence of its charge.[1] The McClellan Committee on Improper Activities in the Labour or Management Field (1957-1959)[2] repeated the charge that the 'Mafia' is at the heart of organized crime in America and it pointed to the Apalachin gangland meeting in upstate New York which took place while the committee was in session, as proof of its evidence. The refusal of the men at Apalachin to state the purpose of their meeting was construed as proof of its 'silent wall of omerta'.[3] The Federal Bureau of Narcotics' twenty years' campaign against the 'Mafia' seemed to have paid off this time as 'Mafia' was introduced to the Committee by the agents of the Bureau as the sole purveyor of illegal narcotics in the country.[4]

Earl Johnson has reconciled pro and anti 'mafia' claims of the fifties on the basis of different perspectives and argued that the Bureau's responsibilities for narcotics

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1. The Committee viewed the 'Mafia' as an elusive, shadowy, and sinister organization that enabled rackets to be fused into a single nationwide organization; it acknowledged, however, that reliable data about the Mafia was hard to find and it offered only three indirect bits of information to support its entire thesis concerning the existence of a contemporary American Mafia; see The Kefauver Committee Report op. cit.

2. The McClellan Committee, op. cit.

3. The government's response to the refusal of the men to talk about why they gathered at the Apalachin meeting was a conspiracy trial which the government lost eventually. It may have appeared to some as the end of the road, but for those who believe in conspiracy theory it was only the beginning. In 1969 through 1972, the protesters against the Vietnam War chose to stand on conscience and to defy the government as a matter of principle, and the government responses in each case were more conspiracy trials; D.C. Smith, op. cit.

4. ibid.

control forced it, and not others, to look at the one area of crime that required a high degree of cooperation and international connections.[1] For those who believe in a centralized criminal organization controlled by Italian-Americans, Valachi's testimony before the Second McClellan Committee was seen as a 'smoking pistol'.[2] It should be noted, however, that a former member of the American syndicates, Vincent Teresa, was convinced that Valachi's testimony might have been tailored by the law enforcement officials.[3] Four years later, the President's Task Force on Organized Crime compounded the picture when it took a cue from Valachi's testimony, and Kefauver's findings and declared that the core of organized crime in America consisted of 24 groups operating as criminal cartels in large cities, and that its membership was exclusively men of Italian descent.[4]

Although all these pronouncements and declarations rested on tenuous evidence and thus lacked intellectual subatance, yet they saw the vocabulary of the crime fighter and the images of the novelist combined to turn 'Mafia' in America into a household word over which its earlier

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1. Earl Johnson, Jr., 'Organized Crime: Challenge to the American Legal System', Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science, volume 53, Dec. 1962; volume 54, March and June 1963.

2. U.S. Government: Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Organized Crime and Illicit Traffick in Narcotics, 88th Congress, Hearings, Part 1-5, Washington. D.C. 1963-1964.

3. V. Teresa with T.C. Renner, Vinnie Teresa's Mafia, Garden City, New York, 1975.

4. Task Force Report: Organized Crime, Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1967: 6.

advocates now have little control.[1] However, the principal effort to add intellectual substance to the prevailing sentiment was Donald Cressey's work for the President's Crime Commission in which the search for reality appeared to have been largely dominated by established conventions.[2] With the publication of The Godfather[3] in 1969, the success of the 'Mafia' label becomes in itself an insurmountable barrier to its understanding as the American public is treated to an explosion of books and films based on The Godfather which in

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1. In the wake of the Apalachin trial in the late fifties, the head of an Italian organization, Joseph Gorassi, raised the issue of prejudice and demanded that the Attorney General end the rumours and innuendoes about the 'Mafia'. The Attorney General, W.P. Rogers, responded that he knew of no crime 'consisting solely of criminals of one particular national origin.' In 1970, following the publication of The Godfather and its impact on society, Attorney General John Mitchell placed a ban on official use of 'Mafia' and 'Cosa Nostra' labels by Justice Department officials. It was his view that the use of these Italian terms reflects badly on Italian-Americans generally. His example was followed by governors of several states; see D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 206, 294.

2. The President's Crime Commission's report, with its accompanying papers, was the first systematic national effort to define and explain organized crime to a contemporary society and in which Professor Cressey served as a Consultant, producing a paper titled 'The Functions and Structure of Criminal Syndicates'. In 1969 he reconstituted his article into a book - Theft of the Nation - in which appeared conclusions that weren't in his original article. It resulted in a twenty-year effort to recast Landesco's original broad concept of organized crime into a narrow focus on specific, identifiable groups of people to the exclusion of other persons and what they might be doing as well; see Theft of the Nation, op. cit.: 20-21.

3. Mario Puzo, The Godfather, New York, 1969.

itself is based on the testimony of Valachi. The success of The Godfather and its offspring in planting the 'mafia' in the mind of the American public as the 'dominant' label for organized crime can hardly be overestimated.

The Offspring of the Godfather

The results of these official assertions and the publication of The Godfather have been the identification of organized crime activity in North America almost exclusively in terms of the Mafia. The success of The Godfather was apparently a matter of timing as the public was ripe for a book that would demonstrate the 'reality' of the twenty-year campaign of the law-enforcement community to portray organized crime as an evil 'alien', conspiratorial entity comprised solely of Italians bearing the label of the 'mafia'[1]. Puzo's impact could be seen not only in fictional but also in non-fictional books[2] that poured into the market in hundreds following his publication, and they

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1. It is clear that the sustained use of a single label which began in the fifties was the work of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics which was bent upon portraying a supercriminal opponent as a partial excuse for its inability to halt heroin smuggling into the country. Other law enforcement officials appropriated the 'Mafia' label by the sixties as a justification for tipping the legal balance away from individual privacy and towards internal security: see D. C. Smith, op.cit. 289-90.

2. See, for instance, R. Salerno and J.S. Tompkin's The Crime Confederation, op.cit. When its paperback was released in 1970, its cover art featured shattered glass and men in trench coats blazing at each other, and a new description of the old content read: "For the first time! The Real and Shocking Facts behind the Fiction of The Godfather."

covered a wide range of crime literature, including dime-novel adventure stories, police stories, urban adventure, and the gothic novel. In the spirit of the time, David Hanna's 1974 biographies of Carlo Gambino and Vito Genovese were promoted by the publishers as 'The Godfather Series'.[1] The 'Mafia' imagery was not only confined to conventional gangster fiction, it was also extended to science fiction and old adventure stories were reissued as 'Mafia' stories, regardless of original contents.

It was a period that saw Peter McCurtin's Cosa Nostra (1970) come around once more as The Hit in 1973, and even Brain Guy which contained only vague references to Italian gangters but no mention of 'Mafia' when it was written in 1934, reappeared thirty nine years later as The Enforcer, and was billed as a successor to The Godfather. As well, Noel Clad's The Savage (1958) was retitled The Mafia in 1970; Ovid Demaris's Candyleg (1961) was reissued with the same name in 1970, and The Organization (1964) was renamed The Contract in the same year. Similarly, Leslie Waller's The Family (1968) was reissued, as was Philip Loraine's A Mafia Kiss - a novel about Sicily with overtones of the Giuliano legend.[2]

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1. D. Hanna, Carlo Gambino: King of the Mafia, New York, 1974.

2. Peter McCurtin, Cosa Nostra, New York: Belmont Books, 1970 (Published as The Hit by Leisure Books, 1973); Noel Clad, The Savage, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1958, (Republished as The Mafia, by Belmont books, 1970); Ovid Demaris, Candyleg, Greenwich, Conn. Fawcett, 1970 (originally published 1961); Philip Loraine, A Mafia Kiss, New York, 1970; ovid Demaris, The Contract, New York; Belmont Books, 1970,published as The Organization, 1964, as Fatal Mistake, 1966; Leslie Waller, The Family, New York, 1968; Benjamin Appel, Brain Guy, New York, 1934.

Perhaps, most importantly, many of the new paperbacks at this time proudly announced their lineage fom Puzo and this can be seen in what their covers proclaim. We may consider just a few of these: "Explosive stories that make The Godfather look pale', in relation to Phil Hirsch's The Mafia (1974);[1] "Deadlier than The Godfather: the most accurate, the most incredible account of the syndicate that has ever been published", in relation to Joseph Rosenberger's The Death Merchant (1971);[2] "violence, sex, and a strange code of honour in a novel that dares dig deeper than The Godfather", in respect of Phil Loraines's A Mafia Kiss;[3] "Now that the Godfather was dead, she was cocksure she could run the family...The Mafia will never be the same again", a reference to R.T. Larkin's The Godmother (1971), and so on.

In the midst of these official declarations, hair-raising headlines and reviews, organized crime in America unwittingly acquired an indelible badge of ethnicity and 'mafia' became its 'dominant' label. It was not only the fiction writers and hard-boiled novelist who have cashed in on organized criminals as mafia and its ethnic connotation; the moviemakers also have benefited from the new portrayal of the gangster which has now an identifiable ethnic label displaying the contrast between good and evil in a kind of

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1. Philip Hirsch (ed.), The Mafia, New York, 1971.
2. Joseph Rosenberger, The Death Merchant, New York, 1971.
3. Philip Loraine, A Mafia Kiss, New York, 1970.
4. R.T. Larkin, The Godmother, New York, 1971.

medieval morality play.[1] In addition to a tendency to moralize, there was apparently a tendency to analyse as well, and the movies of the period responded to this by cashing in on the new ethnic image of the gangster in a more pronounced way. Hollywood was quick to seize the opportunity and the gangster novels based on the events that were taking place in Chicago in the twenties and thirties were transferred into movies and given distinct ethnic focus during the sixties and seventies.[2]

While Little Caesar was made to be largely descriptive, The Seat of Power was meant to explain the awesome power of the gangsters, and Kiss Me Deadly, the killingsthat take place in the lives of mafia gangsters, and so on.[3] Their impact on the society in depicting organized crime as an exclusive monopoly of one ethnic group which happens to feature prominently in recent years as a result of historical succession can hardly be overestimated. But there were some keen observers who did not share the view of 'mafia' mystique and felt that the public was being misled into accepting the view that one particular ethnic group in society controlled all organized criminal activities in the country. They viewed organized crime and 'mafia' as two distinct, separate entities, or at least the latter is a subspecies of the former. Theirs apparently remains a minority, though more accurate, view.

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1. John Baxter, The Gangster Film, New York, 1970; Dorothy Gardner and K. Walker (eds.), Raymond Chandler Speaking, Boston, 1962.

2. See, for instance, David Madden, (ed.), Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties, Carbondale, Illinois, 1968; Benjamin Appel, Brain Guy, op. cit., republished in 1973 as The Enforcer.

3. W.R. Burnett, Little Caesar, New York, 1929; James Horan, The Seat of Power, New York, 1965; M. Spillance, Kiss Me Deadly, New York, 1952.

The Dissenters

Although the book trade and movie enterprises have shown revived interest in 'Mafia', not everybody in the country has bought the idea that 'Mafia' is the controlling factor in organized crime, or, for that matter, organized crime is synonymous with 'mafia'. In retrospect, it is clear that between 1929 when Landesco wrote in Chicago[1] and 1967 (the President's Crime Commission), [2] there was very little serious enquiry into organized crime in America. Daniel Bell's skeptical review of the Kefauver Commission's findings, 'Crime as an American Way of Life',[3] appears to have been the only comment to receive wide attention during this period. From the late fifties to sixties, scholarly publications took note of a revived interest in organized crime and 'mafia'. Earl Johnson's lengthy analysis of the legal challenge of organized crime apparently contributed little to public understanding; not only was its circulation limited, the contributions from men in law enforcement (like Johnson) were seen as little more than rehashes of recent agency accomplishments; and observations from social scientists held generally to the approach that Thrasher and Landesco

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1. John Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, op. cit.

2. The President's Task Force Report: Organized Crime, op. cit.

3. D. Bell, 'Crime as as American Way of Life': The Antioch Review, 1953, op. cit.

had traced rather than embrace a re-emerging conspiracy theory.[1]

Perhaps one of the most useful single articles appearing this time, in contrast to the prevailing perspective of conspiracy and mafia theory, was Sellin's article on organized crime as an economic enterprise, 'organized for the purposes of conducting illegal activities and which, when in pursuit of legitimate venture, uses illegal methods.'[2] There were other dissenting voices that have made some contributions to the academic community but their impact on the general public remains to be seen. Tyler disputed the Mafia-Prohibition origins of organized crime in America; instead he approached organized crime from the American tradition of gangs and buttressed his thesis with examples from New York, Chicago, Denver, and other cities in the mid nineteenth century. His was an effort to confront the key question in the continuing debate over the nature of organized crime, and he raised some important questions that have yet to be dealt with: is its origin, as the prevailing 'Mafia' theory presupposed, a combinaton of forces basically external to the American experience, or is it 'a product and reflection of our

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1. D.C. Smith, op. cit.: 182.

2. T. Sellin, 'Organized Crime: A Business Enterprise', Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 347, May, 1963.

national culture'?[1] Tyler produced considerable evidence to justify the substitution of the latter theory, but supporting material for his notions about gangs, as an indigenous alternative to the alien Mafia, was not apparently as strong. Although Tyler's approach appears now to be dated, yet it remains the only concentrated and systematic effort to assemble and evaluate (to a degree) what had previously been said about organized crime.

Another dissenting voice of the period was that of Schiavo and his analysis of the situation was in effect a sweeping indictment of 'mafia' conspiracy - alien adherents. In his view, the myth of the 'mafia' in America originated with the Hennessey murder case and was later revived by the Kefauver and McClellan committees which misapplied an emotional label to persons and events that have significantly different meanings.[2] He viewed the roots of the mafia in Sicily (rather than in America) as stemming from a state of mind rather than a specific organization, and he believed it was sustained by characteristic Sicilian regard for freedom, justice, and honour, and by the corrupt nature of an externally imposed government.[3] By his insistence on this

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1. Gus Tyler (ed.), Organized Crime in America, op. cit.

2. Giovanni Schiavo reserved particular reproach, for fostering the myth of an American Mafia, for Frederic Sondern and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics; he did not, however, ignore other authors of the previous decade. In a sense, his review of the entire field was unique; see G. Schiavo, The Truth about the Mafia, op. cit. 1962.

3. ibid.

point, Schiavo wanted obviously to restore the concept of the mafia as a state of mind, or a state of society, and not just a tightly knit organization. Unfortunately, his efforts have gone almost totally unnoticed. There is no later reference to Schiavo in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, and no references to his work in any of the organized crime literature prior to 1971.

In supporting the approach taken by Schiavo, Barzini considered the family to be the supreme social organization in Italy and he thought it commanded ultimate loyalty. In his view, there was a mafia in Sicily, but it had two meanings: 'the lower-case mafia is a state of mind. Mafia, in the second and more specialized meaning of the word, is the world-famous illegal organization'.[1] The distiction obviously reflected the earlier observation of Mosca,[2] but Barzini added his evaluation of the relative inportance of the two meanings that reinforced Schiavo's view: 'The second mafia could not flourish if the first were not widespread.'[3] Other articles holding contrary views from the conventional mafia perspective by Robert Woetzel and Gilbert Geis gave little comfort to believers in a 'Mafia' conspiracy, and were generally ignored.[4] For Turkus and

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1. Luigi Barzini, The Italians, London, 1964: 252-275.

2. G. Mosca, Encyclopeadia of the Social Sciences, volume 10, New York, 1933-1934.

3. G. Schiavo, op. cit.

4. Robert Woetzel, 'An Overview of Organized Crime: Mores versus Morality', The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, volume 247, (May 1963): 1-11; Gilbert Geis, 'Violence and Organized Crime', idem, volume 364, (March 1966): 86-122.

Feder, there had been an organized underworld that controlled lawlessness across the U.S. which, they believed, was Unione Siciliano rather than the Mafia. As to the existence of the Mafia which the Kefauver Committee claimed to have discovered, their view was rather unequivocal:

> Perhaps the most pertinent evidence against the existence of mafia in modern-day crime is found in the committee's own confession that after an investigation which lasted one year, travelled to 14 cities.....was unable to uncover one single member of Mafia....[1]

From somewhat different approaches, J.L. Albini and F.A. Ianni have made the most significant contribution to date in the debate over the existence of the 'Mafia' in America and the associated alien-conspiracy theory.[2] Albini's approach to syndicated (rather than conspiratorial) crime goes directly to the 'Mafia' evidence in its own terms, not those of law enforcement.[3] He avoided most of

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1. Burton B. Turkus and Sid Feder, Murder, Inc; op. cit.

2. J.L. Albini, The American Mafia; op. cit. F.A. Ianni, A Family business: Kinship and Social Control in Organized Crime, New York, 1972.

3. A distictive feature of Albini's work is that he is interested in syndicated crime, which is the form organized crime in America has, for the most part, assumed. This may explain the reason why he was able to find his way into a network of people who did not necessarily know each other.

Professor Cressey's pitfalls[1] but, by maintaining a limited allegiance to the distinctions of criminality, was unable to disassociate himself completely from the conventional mould. His contribution which comes through new insights into the meaning of 'Mafia' and a rediscovery of the patron-client relationships takes a fresh look at the meaning of 'Mafia' apart from its conventional organized criminal attributes. Given the social conditions in Sicily and the importance of the family as a social structure, Albini argues that historic conditions created omerta not simply as a mafia characteristic or even a state of silence alone, but as a behaviour pattern that is common among groups that have been victims of oppression and maladministration.[2] In a world in which a man has little control over his own destiny, he notes, there is little incentive to cooperate with his neighbours, 'because in doing so, he jeopardizes his position in a competitive world where goods are scarce.' Instead he must use whatever means, fair or foul, to get his share, and omerta is the only form of social cooperation he engages in which does not require the individual to surrender or sacrifice anything.[3]

Albini points out that the structure and function of mafia in Sicily lie within the realm of patron-client relationships which interweave throughout all social levels

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1. Professor Cressey views organized crime in America mostly in terms of the 'mafia' which he believes is composed of 24 'families' and is structured like a modern bureaucracy; D.R. Cressey, Theft of The Nation, op. cit.

2. J.L. Albini, op. cit.:107-109.

3. ibid: 111-112.

of Sicilian society and constitute a form of complex system of obligation, power postition and mutually binding responsibilities, in which the patron often functions as a 'mediator' between the community and the outside world. In this way, the mafioso is able to penetrate both the legitimate and illegitimate segments of Sicilian society.[1] The mafioso, then, he states, is not a rank or position in a secret organization. 'In any one locale, differing levels of power are manifested by mafioso based upon the number and types of relationships they have managed to develop'. Thus he believed this mafia was neither a secret, sinister 'brotherhood of evil' that Sondern saw, nor a band of 'death-bound assassins' as the New Orleans City Council viewed them.[2] Rather, Albini in contemporary terms described the Sicilian as he was seen at the turn of the century by S. Merlino,[3] Jessie Mario[4] and F.M. Crawford.[5]

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1. ibid.

2. H.S. Nelli, op. cit.

3. S. Merlino, 'Camorra, Mafia and Brigandage', Political Science Quarterly, volume 9 (September 1894): 466-485.

4. Jessie W. Mario, 'Italy and the United States', Nineteenth Century and After, volume 29 (May 1891): 701-718.

5. Francis M. Crawford, Corleone: A tale of Sicily, New York, 1898. This was the first Mafia novel which was based on mistaken identity and the inviolability of the confessional and was well received by American readers. When, however, seventy years later Mario Puzo described the Corleone family of new York in a way that fits established expectation, he was credited by Fred Cook with having 'brought home reality more vividly and realistically than the drier stuff of fact ever can', F.J. Cook, 'Power of the Mafia' Nation, volume 208, (June 16, 1969): 771-772.

The central theme of Albini's work was to show the incongruity of grafting a foreign term and applying it in another foreign situation without any due regard to its history, meaning and origin. The Mafia may be a native of Sicily, but not of America.[1]

Ianni, writing a year later, elaborated on this concept by distinguishing between cooperative relationships that could be called 'organized' and the utilization of mafia values in personal relationships:[2] a distinction that had eluded Cressey. He examined the manner in which entrepreneurial activities were developed within a kinship that avoided the conventional criminal stereotypes. His argument, briefly, was that there are Italian-American criminals who operate in an organized way but the structure of authority and the division of labour reflect family relationships and loyalties, not a bureaucratic organization. In other words, kinship is as important in criminal affairs as it is in any other business. There were links, too, between individuals, but to view these links as a formal structure (as Cressey had done)[3] would be analagous to interpreting the sociogram of a grade-school class as evidence of organization and authority structure, he argues.

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1. J.L. Albini, op. cit.

2. F.A. Ianni, op. cit., especially chapter 6.

3. In his structuralist perspective, Professor Cressey views these links as a form of 'organization' as defined by positions, a hierarchy of jobs filled by individuals operating at various levels of authority; D.R. Cressey, op. cit.: 109-161.

In his view, Italian Mafia families

> are traditional social systems, organized by action and by cultural values which have nothing to do with modern bureaucratic virtues. Like all social systems, they have no structure apart from their functioning... And when the cultural values which underlies the social system weaken, the families also weaken and die.[1]

He points out that secret criminal organizations like the Sicilian mafia or American syndicates are not formal organizations like government or business corporations which can be defined by positions, a hierarchy of jobs to be filled and carried out, or as a blueprint which can be used to construct and reconstruct organizations everywhere. Indeed, he contends that they are not rationally structured into statuses and functions in order to 'maximize profits'.[2] Ianni's work appears to have the virtue of pointing out the distortions introduced by the attempt to compare the structure of the Cosa Nostra to the American bureacratic organization and to describe organizational positions in terms of equivalents in Sicilian Mafia.[3] Furthermore, Ianni examined the importance of family and its 'code of rustic chivalry' which is an integrative behaviour system and which provides a sense of protection and relief in dealing with a stratified society. In his view, the sense of kinship came to the United States with the immigrant and, as Little Italies replicated the village back home, the ritualistic wed of loyalty survived and often presents the appearance of

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1. F.A. Ianni, op. cit.: 108. A distictive feature of Ianni's work is that he appears to be interested in syndicates as distinct from syndicated crime. Like Albini, he apparently had no connection with any law enforcement agency. He notes that practically all recent research into syndicated crime has been based on agency files, and that the focus of these agency studies 'has been on criminal activity rather than on the nature of the organization through which the activity occurs', ibid.: 8.

2. ibid.

3. ibid.

'organized conspiracy' to the outsiders. He argues that it was reinforced by weak governmental control and by the lack of individual opportunity in the restricted world of immigrant labour.[1] We can combine Ianni's insights with those of Albini and perceive a contemporary perspective that supports a credible alternative approach to two separate concepts: 'organized crime' and 'Mafia'. In effect, their perspectives call attention to the historical fact, often overlooked by the newsmedia and the public, that the two terms began as separate conceptual entities and that organized crime had existed in America for many decades before the 'mafia' label came into use.

Finally, in analysing the fact and myth of the contemporary 'mafia' in America, in relation to the present-day images of organized crime, Smith has identified three threads in the broader conceptual fabric of 'crime'. The first thread he calls the official and reportorial approach to real persons identified with organized crime; then the novelist's approach to the fictional criminal who used to be called a gangster but since 1969 has been known as a mafioso; and finally, the scholarly approach to a sociological concept of organized crime. He notes that these were essentially independent views at the outset, but after 1950 (with the Kefauver Committee's declaration) they became increasingly intertwined; and with the President's Crime Commission report in 1967 and the publication of The Godfather in 1969, the three threads have each become infected with the 'mafia' label.[2]

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1. ibid: 43-61.

2. D. C. Smith, op.cit.: 289-290.

Although the contributions of these scholars have been immense within the academic community in distinguishing between the entities called 'organized crime, and 'the Mafia', and in refuting the absurd notion that the latter exists in America and is entirely responsible for that country's organized crime activities; yet it can be argued that their voice is still in the minority, and that the 'Mafia' continues to be the 'dominant' and common label in use among the general public in North America. One has yet to find a book on organized crime published in this continent which does not include in its title that magic word 'Mafia'.[1] The word has even now been extended to characterize organized criminals in other countries apart from the U.S. and Sicily.[2]

There are, however, certain characteristics of the American syndicates which are found in the Sicilian Mafia and which may serve as a justification for the exponents of 'mafia' theories in the U.S. in calling their organized criminals 'mafias'.

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1. Fenton Bresler realized this fact in a hard way. In 1980 he published his book on the Triads under the title of 'The Trail of the Triads', a title that did not mean much to most people in North America. A year later, because the title did not command enough sales, he changed the title to 'The Chinese Mafia' and sales caught fire; F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981.

2. Similarly, Robertson's book on the Triads bearing the name of 'Triangle of Death' as its main title, has to add the words 'The Chinese Mafia' as part of the book's title. Frank Roberton, Triangle of Death: The Inside Story of the Triads - The Chinese Mafia, London, 1977.

Earmarks of American Syndicates

The American syndicates, like their Sicilian counterparts, are essentially men of politics and business.[1] In the early decades of the century they were able to influence the outcome of electoral contests through the power of their capital and manpower,[2] as in the case of Sicily. Prior to Prohibition, however, their activities were known to be parasitical,[3] consisting of extortion and 'protection' carried on individuals and business establishments,[4] as the mafiosi do in Sicily. Although these rackets still constitute a steady source of income today, the main distinguishing feature of the syndicates since the Prohibition appears to be that of the middleman suppling the needed prohibited goods and services in which they, like their counterparts in Sicily, usually tend toward near monopoly, using violence and intimidation to maintain control.[5]

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1. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, Organizing Crime, New York, 1981: 65-70.

2. See, for example, the account of the battle by Capone and his gang to re-elect mayor 'Big' Bill Thompson of Chicago in 1927; K. Allsop, The Bootleggers, op. cit.; 128-129. J. Landesco, op. cit.: 25-83; F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance, London, 1976: 123.

3. J.A. Mack with H. Kenner, The Crime Industry, Farnborough, Westmead, 1977: 173.

4. Task Force Report: Organized Crime, op. cit.

5. W.J. Chambliss, On the Take: From Petty Crooks to Presidents, Bloomington, Indiana, 1982: 32-49.

Like their mafia counterparts in Sicily, the American syndicates owe their extraordinary longevity largely to their powerful friends in strategic positions in the society whose interests are served by the syndicates.[1] In this respect they contrast with the European counterparts (Italy being the exception); such arrangements as exist with the European counterparts and officials are said to be ad hoc, flexible and changing.[2] The insipid 'alliance' betwen the American syndicates and their lawyers which enables the former to avoid arrest, conviction and sometimes long-term imprisonment through the process of 'fix' does not appear to operate with respect to European mobs and lawyers.[3] Futhermore, the European mobs may engage in some incidental illicit trafficking but apparently they fill no major role of middleman supplying powerful economic demands for forbidden goods and services.[4]

Organized crime in America has persisted for many generations despite all the vicissitudes of internal and inter-syndicate feuds and in the face of massive law enforcement mobilizations mainly because of two factors which

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1. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.

2. The Guerini empire in Marseilles is said to have lasted about twenty years and then came to an end, apparently when it lost its political support. Similarly, the activities of the Krays brothers in Britain are said to have lasted only a few years before the officials caught up with them; A.W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, New York, 1972: 38; J.A. Mack, op. cit.

3. See, for example, G. Tyler, Organized Crime in America, op. cit.: 15-9; E.H. Sutherland, The Professional Thief, Chicago, 1965. M. Mockridge and R.H. Prall, The Big Fix, New York, 1954; J.A. Mack, op. cit.

4. J.A. Mack, op. cit

have always worked in its favour: the protective shield it enjoys at the hand of the power structure, and the failure of American socialism. In the double alliance with the police and politicians, police payoffs and 'campaign contributions' have been the traditional means by which American syndicates have been able to acquire immunity from the law in the course of their operations.[1] This striking feature of the syndicates to influence official power holders can be understood in terms of the fact that American government at all levels is largely a matter of pressure-group politics,[2] and it is a feature which appears to be lacking with regard to their European counterpart. Policing in America is often an avenue to wealth for the incumbent, for the money flowing through the rackets is usually large, and the profits one of the highest of any industry in the world.[3]

'Campaign contributions' by syndicates usually provide the cash nexus that serves the interests of both the contributor and the politician. These elements of the American syndicates constitute the base support on which the axis of syndicated crime has revolved for several decades in the country. Just as the failure of socialism in Sicily up to the first three decades of the twentieth century was

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1. W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 50-80; J.A. Gardiner, The Politics of Corruption: Organized Crime in an American City, New York, 1970.

2. Philip L. Graham, 'High cost of Politics', National Municipal Review, July 1955: 347-351.

3. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 52.

intimately related to the success of the mafia during the period,[1] while its success from the 1940s onwards led to the decline of the mafia's hold on the society,[2] the degree to which syndicated crime has successfully prevailed in America more than in any other western country is partly due to the failure of socialism in that country, in our view.[3] It is argued that the syndicate activity has been functional,[4] but admittedly this is so for the powerful, 'respectable' members of the crime network and not for the workers.[5] The U.S. and Canada are the only western countries where a socialist party has never held power. Despite the preoccupation with the 'Mafia', however, it can be argued that the real power behind organized crime in America is not the 'Mafia', but the 'respectable' members of the society who have symbiotic relationships with organized criminals and who operate in networks in which organized criminals play the role of servants.

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1. A. Blo'.k, 'mafia and Peasant rebellion as contrasting factors in Sicilian Latifundism', European Journal of Sociology, 10, 1969: 95-116.

2. E.J. Hobsbawn, Primitive Rebels: Studies in archiac forms of social movements in the 19th. and 20th. centuries, Manchester, 1959: 44-49.

3. For some of the reasons of this failure, see D. Bell, op. cit.: 275-298.

4. D. Bell, op.cit.: 183-192.

5. F. Pearce, op. cit.: 133.

Organized Crime Symbiotic Network

Organized crime by its very nature is a protected crime whose very existence often derives from the connivance and cooperation it receives from the powerful elites of society, hence it has often been viewed as one of the crimes of the powerful.[1] As one political campaigner once told his audience in New York City, 'I have said before and I say again, that this (organized crime) could not happen were there not a definite link between the big-time gambling racketeers and those in high office...'[2] In the past, reliance on police and other law enforcement agencies for information on organized crime has inevitably led to an overemphasis on the role of those who fit the stereotype of the 'criminal' - often the infamous 'mafia' - and a corresponding de-emphasis on the importance of businessmen, poiticians, and law enforcers as institutionalized components of the system which creates and perpetuates the American syndicates that supply the vices, payoffs, and 'campaign contributions'.[3] Recent empirical studies conducted in different U.S. cities in the last one and a half decades have clearly shown that the main axis of organized crime today is not the 'mafia' or 'Cosa Nostra' but official corruption, and that organized crime is not run by a group of private

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1. F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful, op. cit.

2. Daniel P. Moynihan, 'The Private Government of Crime' in Bruce J. Cohen (ed.), Crime in America: Perspectives on Criminal and Delinquent Behaviour, Itasca, Ill., 1972: 321.

3. W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.

citizens.[1]

These studies have found that organized crime is not run and controlled by a national syndicate with a 'commission' or 'board of directors' who have a feudal-like control over underlings spread across the nation; that organized crime really consists of a coalition of politicians, law-enforcement officials, businessmen, union leaders, and (in some ways least important of all) racketeers.[2] The coalition can be viewed as a network of powerful individuals who have shared interests and cooperate with one another in the management and profit of organized crime. It is not always easy to say who dominates this coalition, for roles vary and fluctuate as people come and go, and, as Chambliss and others say, it is always a mistake to look for a 'godfather' in the crime network.[3] Since the end of Prohibition, the activities of the networks have centred in the areas of gambling, pimping, prostitution, drug trafficking, usury, and bookmaking.[4] The range of these

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1. Although these studies were confined to certain particular cities, their findings are basically applicable to most U.S. big cities in general; John A. Gardiner, The Politics of Corruption: Oganized Crime in an American City, New York, 1970; J.A. Gardiner and D.J. Olson, Wincanton: 'The Politics of Corruption', Appendix 'B', Task Force Report: Orgsnized Crime, op. cit., which studied the city of Reading, Pennsylvania; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit., a study on the City of Seattle, Washington.

2. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 9; A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.; A. Block, East Side - West Side; Organized Crime in New York 1930-1950, Cardiff, 1980; F. Pearce, op. cit.

3. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 9, 73, 101; E. Kefauver, Crime in America, Garden City, New York, 1951: 13.

4. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.

enterprises often makes it possible for organized crime to move freely but not without sharing the profits and paying homage to those members of 'straight' society who provide 'entry permit' into the enterprises.

Thus the people who run the organizations that supply the vices are not simply members of a criminal society. The study of organized crime, to be more meaningful, should consider official corruption, bureaucracy, and power, and should not rely on governmental and police agencies for the information on vices and rackets; these agencies often inadvertently contribute to the miscasting of the issues in terms that are descriptively biased and theoretically sterile, and often divert attention from sociologically interesting and important issues raised by the persistence of crime networks.[2] As a result, the real significance of the existence of syndicates is often overlooked; for instead of viewing these social entities as being intimately tied to, and in symbiosis with, the legal and political bureaucracies of the state, these agencies often emphasize the criminality of only a portion of those involved. Such a view contributes very little to our knowledge of organized crime and even less to attempts at its control.[3] Of critical importance are the roles of politicians, law-enforcers, union leaders and

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1. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.

2. Alan A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, Organizing Crime, op. cit.: 113-114.

3. ibid.

businessmen for the network of organized crime in America, as elsewhere, includes not only petty crooks but also powerful officials.[1]

The official view in America that organized crime, like the radical movements, is controlled by a fraternity whose traditions are 'un-American' and whose loyalties lie with an international organization based in a foreign country often attempts to explain it culturally rather than structurally. Consequently, the focus for law enforcement and public concern has become the Italian-American community rather than the political and economic system.[2] Pointing out that the National Crime Commissions have for years been chasing phantoms in the entity called the 'mafia', Hank Messick has observed that 'if every member of the Mafia (or Cosa Nostra) were jailed tomorrow, organized crime would be just as powerful as ever...'[3] The emphasis on the common racketeers by the officials only serves to mask the role of the powerful friends for whom the underworld acts as servant. As the history of any past crime networks such as those of Al Capone and the Guerini's in Marseille would indicate, organized criminals usually owe their existence as servant to the powerful elites in the society, and their demise usually follows when the elites' support is withdrawn.[4]

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1. It was disclosed during the Watergate episode that President Nixon's source of the infamous one 'million-dollar hush money' that he told John Dean he could get was the Teamster Union pension fund. His Vice-President, Spiro Agnew, in 1973 pleaded 'no contest' to the charge of taking kickbacks for government contracts for many years. At the same time, he was making speeches across the country decrying 'crime in the street'and demanding reinstatement of law and order; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: ix.

2. F. Pearce, The Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance, London, 1976: 121.

3. H. Messick, Lansky, New York, 1971: 8.

4. J. Kobler, Capone: The Life and World of Al Capone, New York, 1971; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 35-49.

ORGANIZED CRIMINALS AS SERVANTS OF THE POWER STRUCTURE

1. Organized Crime and Politicians

In 1931, the National Commission on Law Observance, after completing an inquiry into the police, concluded:

> Nearly all of the large cities suffer from an alliance between politicians and criminals...[1]

The commission went on to enumerate all the large cities in America that have been under the control of a few syndicates for a number of years and bemoaned the fact that 'the people have frequently been betrayed by their elected officials.'[2] What has been uncovered in recent years in Seattle and Reading ('Wincanton') appears to be true in virtually every big city in the United States and has been true since at least the early 1900s. At the turn of the century, Lincoln Steffens observed that 'the spirit of graft and lawlessness is the American spirit.'[3] He went on to describe the results of his inquiries:

> In the very first study - St. Louis - the startling truth lay bare that corruption was not merely political; it was financial, commercial, social;

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1. National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement; Lawlessness in Law Enforcement, Washington, D.C.,Government Printing Office, 1931.

2. ibid.

3. L. Steffens, The Shame of the Cities, New York, 1904: 151.

> the ramifications of boodle were so complex, various and far-reaching, that our mind could hardly grasp them.... St. Louis exemplified boodle; Minneapolis police graft; Pittsburgh a political and industrial machine; Philadelphia general civil corruption....[1]

Twenty years later, the Kefauver Crime probe found identical situations in the fourteen cities it examined.[2]

It has been noted that the gambling, prostitution, and other vices that flourish in the lower centres of the cities do so with the compliance, and cooperation of the major political and law enforcement officials of those cities.[3] In Seattle, for instance, those involved in providing gambling and other vices point out that their services are profitable because of the demand for them by 'respectable' members of the community.[4] As Tannenbaum has observed,'it is clear from the evidence at hand that a considerable measure of the crime in the community is made possible and perhaps inevitable by the peculiar connection that exists between the political organization of our large cities and the criminal activities of various gangs that are permitted and even encouraged to operate'.[5]

Like all activities of the criminal network, political influence is usually obtained in a variety of ways, of which campaign contribution from the syndicates to the political

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1. ibid.

2. Estes Kefauver, Crime in America, Garden City, New York, 1951.

3. A.A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 101.

4. ibid.

5. Frank Tannenbaum, Crime and the Community, Boston, 1978: 128.

elites is the most common. This cash nexus which buys the permission to operate and immunity from prosecution often constitutes an important source of money for the political elites. It is a connection that ties the syndicates to most American politicians, even up to candidates running for President. As Gosnell notes, '...the gangsters and other criminals in America enjoy extraordinary immunities from interference on the part of the law enforcing agencies. They realize that this freedom from restraint depends upon how useful they can make themselves to the politicians.'[1] In 1968, a well known gambler, Mickey Cohen, detailed the amount of money he and his group raised for Richard Nixon as a result of Nixon's public criticism of organized crime. He stated, in part, 'in view of the fact that Mr. Nixon is now making speeches in his campaign....I have decided that the people of California should know the true facts with Nixon's entry into politics being based upon money raised by me and my associates in the gambling fraternity who started him off with $26,000.'[2] As noted in the preceding chapter, a similar situation obtains with regards to Mafia members and politicians in Sicily, and is probably true in other capitalist democracies where organized crime exists. In 1927 Al Capone was reported to have contributed $280,000 to 'Big' Bill Thompson of Chicago for his re-election as mayor that year, and more recently Alexander Heard estimates that organized crime currently pays for fifteen percent of

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1. H.F. Gosnell, 'The Political Party versus the Political Machine', The Annals: 169, September 1933: 21-28.

2. Drew Pearson, 'Racketeer Details His Aid to Nixon', The Free Press (Detroit), October 31, 1968.

campaign expenditures at state and local levels.[1]

In the 1930s through to the 1960s an unspoken détente prevailed between the Republicans and Democratic leaders with regards to some of the major sources of campaign contributions; the Republican and Democratic parties came to control different sources of the available political fund. It was obvious that if either party could undermine a major source of the other party's political 'contribution', the balance of power so crucial to any workable détente would be severely threatened as the money shifted into the coffers of one party.[2] Richard Nixon's campaign shortly after his election to the Presidency in 1968 was believed to be, first and foremost, a strategy designed to undermine this balance; had it been successful it would have probably shifted much of the labour-union-crime-network political contribution from the Democratic to the Republican party.[3] It has been suggested that the Nixon administration's campaign against 'organized crime' was in fact a campaign against those crime networks that were most closely connected with his political foes, Republicans and Democrats. To accomplish this, his administration systematically exposed crime networks in Democratic Party strongholds, while ignoring networks which supported Nixon's wing of the Republican party.[4]

In state after state, the weight of the government - the FBI, Internal Revenue Service, and Crown Attorneys - was

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1. F. Pearce, op. cit.: 123; J. Kobler, op. cit.: 199.

2. W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 157.

3. ibid.

4. Anthony Sampson, The Sovereign State of ITT, New York, 1973: 217-288.

brought to bear on the crime networks that were identified with the Democratic Party by the Nixon Administration. Newly appointed Republican U.S. attorneys called grand juries to investigate corruption and racketeering and to hand out indictment in the states that were under the Democratic crime networks. In the process, Meyer Lansky[1] was forced to sell his hotels and casinos in Miami and The Bahamas to Bebe Rebozo, a Nixon associate and friend. Lansky had contributed at least $240,000 to Hubert Humphrey's campaign against Nixon. As well, once in office, Nixon continued the Johnson tradition of selling favours and protecting investments for those who supported him politically. A variety of industries that contributed to his campaign were rewarded with generous treatment.[2] Abe Fortas, one of President Johnson's appointees to the U.S. Supreme court was less fortunate, however, than Johnson, and when his links with a notorious financial wheeler-dealer in Florida were revealed, Fortas had to resign from the Supreme Court.[3] As in the case of the Sicilian mafia, the ability of the American syndicates to purchase immunity from the law is not only limited to corrupt politicians looking for 'campaign contribution', but extends to law enforcers as well.

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1. Meyer Lansky, in his nation-wide operations, exhibited a political shrewdness by choosing his candidates and even financed candidates who competed with each other. Thus he paid handsomely into the campaigns of both Democratic and Republican candidates running against each other; see Martin A. Gosch and Richard Hammer, The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano, New York, 1974; Hank Messick, Lansky, New York, 1971.

2. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 175-176.

3. ibid.

2. Organized Crime and Law Enforcers

Shared interests which connect politicians with the syndicates also connect the latter with law enforcement officials and should be seen as one of the concomitant contradictions inherent in the operation of competitive capitalism.[1] In the U.S., the laws of some states, counties and cities are written in such a way as to make it impossible for anyone to operate profitably a tavern, caberet, hotel or nightclub without violating the laws.[2]. Moreover, laws prohibiting vices have traditionally lacked consensus. Faced with such legal ambiguities and conflicting demands, police officials often follow the least line of resistance. Using the discretion inherent in their position, law enforcers usually follow procedures that minimize organizational strain and adopt a tolerance policy toward the vices, selectively enforcing the laws when it suits their advantage to do so.[3]

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1. Law enforcers normally follow orders from their political masters, and in the process it is only natural that they would demand a piece of the action; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 91-96; see also Daniel Bell, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, New York, 1976.

2. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 100.

3. McMullan has noted that the first precondition for corruption is a substantial conflict over the goals of the legal system. He observes that 'a high level of corruption is the result of a wide divergence between the attitudes, aims, and methods of the government of a country and those of the society in which they operate.... Therefore the different levels of corruption in different countries depend on the extent to which government and society are homogeneous', see M. McMullen, 'A Theory of Corruption', Sociological Review, IX, July, 1961: 184-185.

Because gambling, prostitution and drug trafficking are profitable, competition among operators is usually fierce and violent because legal remedies are non-existent. Thus the police view the policy of cooperation in order to control these vices as advantageous in that it renders the legal system capable of exercising considerable control over potential source of trouble.[1] The mechanism by which corrupt police officials come to share an interest in maintaining corruption and widespread criminality is normally the cash payoffs. As in the cases of Seattle, Washington, and Wincanton, Pennsylvania, the syndicates worked with the City Hall to put cooperative men in office, to buy off those who occupied strategic enforcement positions, and to ensure their loyalty by regular payoffs.[2] To control access to very lucrative operations and maintain profit-sharing arrangements, prominent syndicates often use the police to deprive uncooperative gamblers or bookies of their source of income, or to arrest those not paying their tribute.[3]

On the state and local levels corruption of police and politicians is revealed with a regularity that is as certain as physical laws. In 1974, the Knapp Commission which investigated the corruption in the New York City Police Department reported that corruption of the police was widespread; that it took various forms depending upon the activity involved, appearing at its most sophisticated among

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1. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 88-96.

2. J.A. Gardiner, op. cit.: 122.

3. ibid.

plainclothesmen assigned to enforce gambling laws; that these men engage in what is known in police parlance as a 'pad', collecting regular biweekly or monthly payments amounting to thousands of dollars from each of the gambling establishments in the area under their jurisdiction, and dividing the take in equal shares.[1] It noted that when supervisors were involved, they received a share and a half. The commission found evidence that payoffs were widespread in other divisions of the New York Police Department as well.[2] In the 1970s, the Investigative Task Force Report of the Seattle Police Department found similar patterns of police corruption, which can be observed in almost all the U.S. cities. The Task Force noted that illegal payoffs and bribery in various forms have existed in the Seattle Police Department for many years;[3] that a large portion of the rank and file of the officers were involved. It revealed that officers were generally recruited into the system by older officers, after they had been carefully screened to determine their reliability and willingness to participate in the payoff system; that the structure of payoff system with the Patrol Division was similar to that of the Vice Squad.[4] The Task Force Report revealed that the criteria for admittance was a display of tolerance and approval toward other officers' transgressions and a propensity for engaging in similar conduct.[5]

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1. The Knapp Commission of Inquiry into the New York City Police Corruption, Office of the Governor, Albany, 1974.

2. ibid.

3. W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 238.

4. ibid.: 240.

5. ibid.: 24.

Generally speaking, as the symbiotic relationships of the police officials and organized criminals elsewhere have shown,[1] the cooperation of the police is admittedly more crucial than that of the politicians for organized crime to exist and operate, for in the final analysis it is the police who have to decide when and how the laws against vice should be enforced.

3. Union-Business Component

Historians of American labour usually identify two strains in trade unionism: the 'pure and simple' business unionism of Samuel Gompers, and the social unionism of Sidney Hillman or Walter Reuther.[2] But beneath these avowed differences, however, there is a fundamental consensus shared by both kinds of labour leaders - that a corporate society offers the best means of achieving industrial stability, order and social harmony.[3] C. Wright Mills was perhaps the first social scientist to emphasize that labour leaders

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1. See, for instance, W.P. Morgan, The Triad Societies in Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1982; J.L.Albini, op. cit.; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 38-52, 112-124; W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff (eds.), Whose Law, What Order?: A Conflict Approach to Criminology, New York, 1976.

2. See, S. Yellen, American Labour Struggles, New York, 1936; R.O. Boyer and H.M. Morais, A History of the American Labour Movement, New York, 1955.
Ronald Rodosh, 'The Corporate Ideology of American Labour Leaders from Gompers to Hillman, in James Weinstein and D.W. Eakins (eds.), For A New America: Essays in History and Politics from Studies on the Left, 1959-1967, New York, 1970: 125-126.

3. R. Radosh, op. cit.

in America framed unions as instruments for integration into the existing political economy, not levers for changing it. The result, in Mills' words, was a 'kind of procapitalist syndicalism from the top.'[1] Mills may have been partly right in his assessment of the role of unions, but the issue goes deeper than mere integration.

For our purposes, however, it can be argued that labour unions in America have also been an instrument for manipulation and exploitation of workers by corrupt union leaders in alliance with the big business.[2] The struggle between social classes for control of the profits from production inevitably led to a situation in the early 1900s where business was faced with a serious challenge to its control of labour, and the most serious of these being the introduction of communist and socialist ideology into the labour movement.[3] The dilemma thus created for business was whether to join into an unholy alliance with some union leaders or to risk the possibility of losing the entire game in the form of a labour force that would demand not just higher wages, but control of the means of production. The dilemma was resolved in favour of supporting and joining those in the labour movement who employed illegal and violent means to circumvent the demands of workers.[4]

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1. C. Wright Mills, 'The Labour leaders and the Power Elite' in A. Komhauser, R. Dubin, A. Ross, (eds.), Roots of Industrial Conflict' New York, 1954: 144-152; C.W. Mills, Power, Politics and People: Essays of C.W. Mills, Edited by Irving L. Horowitz, New York, 1963: 108-109.

2. F. Pearce, op. cit.

3. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 88.

4. ibid.

The traditional perspective in the sociological literature often finds the roots of labour-union racketeering in the unions themselves and makes frequent allusion to, but little systematic analysis of, corruption in labour unions.[1] However, one notable exception in this regard appears to be Daniel Bell's classic study in New York City of the 'Racket-Ridden Longshoremen'.[2] Although his analysis is unquestionably insightful and imaginative, it appears to be seriously flawed because of its uncritical acceptance of the functional paradigm as the lens through which racketeering in the Longshoremen's Union is viewed.[3] According to Bell:

> Industrial racketeering performs the function - at a high price - which other agencies cannot do, of stabilizing a chaotic market and establishing an order and structure in the industry.[4]

Rather than tracing the historical development of racketeering in the New York Longshoremen's Union, Bell seeks to 'explain' the phenomenon solely in terms of the 'function' served by the existence of racketeering and fails to ask the appropriate question: functional for whom? and in the process he is apparently misled into believing that 'what is good for shippers is also good for everyone.'

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1. Lester Velie, 'The Mafia tightens its grip on the teamsters', Readers Digest, August 1974: 99; U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Deskbook on Organized Crime, Washington, D.C., 1972; A. Bequai, Organized Crime, op. cit.: 51-68.

2. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, (1967), op. cit.: 176-209.

3. For a criticism of Bell's position, see F. Pearce, op. cit.: 131-146.

4. D. Bell, op. cit.

Although the development of racket-ridden unions may be 'functional' for businesses and labour racketeers, there is no doubt that it is 'dysfunctional' for the workers and for the development of organized labour. The creation of racket-ridden unions makes possible the manipulation of union leadership by owners at the expense of an independent labour union that would represent the interests of the workers.[1] In the 1930s it was difficult to find any key industries and trades in New York and,indeed,in America generally which were not subject in one form or another to racketeering, which was well defined then as organized extortion by powerful syndicates.[2] This was arguably the result of the often violently antagonistic relations between labour and capital, workers and bosses in the modern era.[3] A look at the history of trade unionism in America reveals the violent tactics which were adopted by employers to prevent, contain, and even destroy unions, including the use of hired thugs to engage in strikebreaking, and purchasing the services of strikebreakers from private detective agencies such as Pinkerton, Burns, and Farley, and from Molly Maguires.[4]

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1. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 87; L. Huberman, The Labour Spy Racket, New York, 1937.

2. An investigation conducted by Samuel Seabury for the District Attorney's office in Manhattan in 1931 pinpointed at least 32 key industries that were pervaded by racketeers, see, The New York Times, (September 1, 1931): 14.

3. S. Yellen, American Labour Struggles, op. cit.

4. For detailed accounts of the labour struggle in America, see L. Huberman, The Labour Spy Racket, New York, 1937; S. Lens, The Labour Wars: From the Molly Maguires to the Sitdowns, Garden City, New York, 1973; P.S. Foner, The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917, New York, 1965. I. Bernstein, The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966.

As a result of this situation, many gangsters turned to industrial racketeering as a fruitful source of income.[1] Whereas before gangsters had been used to stop any unionization, they were now used also to try to emasculate any locals that were set up by setting up 'paper locals' (local branhes only in name, with no control by their rank-and-file members) and negotiate 'sweet-heart' contracts.[2]

As in the case of the politicians and police, the coalition and conspiracy between labour racketeers and owners of business and industries has always worked for the benefits of both sides. Such conspiracies often provide the groundwork for the more publicized kind of corruption - the domination of both locals and certain national unions by the likes of Jimmy Hoffa, Dave Beck,[3] Frank Fitzsimmons and Tony Boyle, who enriched themselves and their associates by looting union treasuries and stealing from the rank and file through institutionalized loan sharking and other criminal activities.[4]

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1. Landesco has detailed the activities of the racketeers in the 1920s such as Al Capone, Arnold Rothstein, Louis Buchalter and many others who offered their services as insurance against upsets of any kind, from the unions, from competition or from bombings; see J. Landesco, op. cit.: 107-147.

2. F. Pearce, op. cit.: 135. 'Control of a union local often... contro of the host of rackets that are spawned on the dock. A victorious clique has a number of concessions it can parcel out which include bookmaking, loan sharking, kickbacks for jobs, etc. But the biggest prize of all was the loading racket'; see Bell, op. cit.: 183.

3. Dave Beck's friendship with and support for the Democrats is believed to have caused the Eisenhower administration to investigate his misuse of the union funds which eventually sent him to jail in 1956. His replacement, Jimmy Hoffa, a Republican supporter, was sent to jail ten years later under a Democratic adiminstration, for stealing the Teamster's Union funds.

4. W.J. Chambliss, Organized Crime, op. cit.: 87.

It is a classic situation in which organized labour is turned into organized crime. Labour racketeering in America is as old as the history of violent struggle between labour and management and its capital, and it has been the chief instrument by which the latter has always maintained the upper hand in the struggle. In 1978, a high official of the Justice Department told a Congressional hearing that efforts to get the Labour Department to take an aggressive posture toward labour racketeering, 'including the infiltration of labour unions' by organized crime, had not proven successful.[1] As well, the history of pension funds in the U.S. is replete with instances of frauds by the union officials, of multi-million dollar loans made to firms owned by organized criminals, and of investments made in fraudulent and non-existent schemes.[2]

It can be argued that the persistent pervasion of racketeering in most American industries is due partly to the operation of capitalist economy which provides the basic conditions[3], and partly to the failure of socialist and communist ideology to take root in the country[4], and the naive acceptance by the majority of the workers that what is good for the industry is necessarily good for them.[5] This view which has been consistently articulated by union leaders usually depicts the role of labour as one of making the system work, not to change it.

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1. 'Civiletti chides Labour Department on Strike Force Cooperation', Washington Post, March 3, 1978: A29; A. Bequai, op. cit.: 65.

2. A. Bequai, op. cit.: 63-64.

3. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 182.

4. For reason why socialism has not succeeded in America, see Bell's analysis from the point of view of a liberal democrat who is an exponent of capitalist system: 'The Failure of American Socialism: The Tension of Ethnic and Politics', Bell, op. cit.: 275-298.

5. Robert E. Lane, Political Ideology: Why the American Common Man Believes What He Does, New York, 1962.

As Dave Beck of the Teamster's Union once put it:

> Our aim has been to develop better understanding between industry and labour. This is our contribution toward good government. We have inculcated the concept of...a definite understanding between those employed and those who invest capital. We do our part to make the system work.[1]

On the other hand, those who subscribe to the opposite perspective realize that workers and capitalist owners have nothing in common. As Harry Bridges saw it, 'we take the stand that we as workers have nothing in common with the employers. We are in a class struggle, and we subscribe to the belief that if the employer is not in business, his products will still be necessary and we still will be providing them when there is no employing class.'[2] This belief which was at the heart of the ideology of the Industrial Workers of the World[3] is traditionally considered a dangerous doctrine in America and its advocates have usually been the target of law enforcement agencies, as they are perceived as a threat to the ruling capitalist class.[4] A strong socialist labour union would have been able to eliminate the racketeers, and in the country as a

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1. M. Morgan, Skid Road, New York, 1951: 250.

2. ibid.: 248.

3. Organized in Chicago in June 1905, the I.W.W. hoped to create a labour-union equivalent of the Socialist party. Its chairman, William D. Haywood, at the founding convention told the delegates: 'The working class and the employing class have nothing in common... Our duty is to compile the category of crimes perpetrated by the capitalist class', see, William Preston Jr., Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933, New York, 1966: 35-44.

4. F. Pearce, op. cit.: 127.

whole such a socialist influence seemed to be a possibility up until the late 1940s.[1] Even in the thirties when the 'Communists sought to gain a foothold among the Italian workers, it is admitted that such actions were dealt with summarily.[2] It would appear that the activities of the Communists were evidently perceived as threats to the long-established patterns of political and economic accommodation between the racketeers and the industrial barons.

It can be seen and argued that the real operators of organized crime in America at the present time are not the 'Mafia' members most of whom have since long branched out into legitimate business or simply retired from the field; however, as a result of the succession process and ethnic bias the mafia continues, unfortunately, to dominate organized crime debate in the country. As we have shown in this chapter, a debate on organized crime in America, as in Sicily, should focus not only on the racketeers but equally, if not more, on the corrupt politicians, law enforcement officials, union leaders, and businessmen who are in symbiotic relationship with the racketeers. Organized crime has persisted for many decades in America mainly became of this unholy alliance between the 'respectable' members of the society and the racketeers who supply the illegal goods and services demanded by the former. It is an alliance or coalition in which organized crime has traditionally played the role of a servant for the ruling class who uses it to maintain its political and economic domination. While organized crime serves the ends of the ruling class it also serves those of the marginal elements in the crime network by providing them with an alternative avenue through which they could enhance their social status.

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1. F. Pearce, op. cit.: 143.

2. D. Bell, op. cit.: 197.

An Alternative Route to Wealth And Power

If there is one conspicuous theme that the study of organized crime should be oriented around it is that of wealth and the power it brings to its possessor. The pursuit of wealth in one guise or another has been the cement which holds the underworld and upperworld together. As Block and Chambliss have noted,[1] organized crime always reflects the structure and tension in civil society, the opportunities for profit and power, and the contradictions in political economy.[2] Whereas a social structure may not in itself be the direct cause of organized crime, its operation may be such as to provide conditions conducive to the development and growth of the phenomenon. The logic of capitalism, it has been argued, is a logic from which crime networks often arise and become 'institutionalized'.[3] Capitalism is based on the private ownership of property which can be acquired legally by selling one's labour, products or providing services, all of which can be exchanged for money at a profit. Thus a society that is bent on accumulating capital often gives rise to criminal conduct also bent on acquiring property and wealth.[4] Although capitalism provides the basic conditions, it is admittedly the organization of

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1. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 131.

2. For a schematic treatment of the general model of contradictions and their resultant conflicts and dilemmas in Capitalist societies, and their resolutions, see idem: 7-10.

3. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 181.

4. R. Quinney, Criminology: An Analysis and Critique of Crime in America, Boston, 1975.

politics in America that joins the capitalist mode of production to make the ground fertile for the creation and sustenance of crime networks.[1]

Because money has always been a crucial factor in getting elected to public office in America, crime networks with huge sums of money have naturally been a valuable source of funds to oil capitalism's political machinery. In the normal course of events some politicians will come to cooperate more fully than others with the crime networks which receive in return prmission and immunity to operate their business.[2] In the process the crime networks become an institutionalized, fixed, and permanent link in the chain of the country's political economy, and thus persist year after year with only the faces and methods of operation changing.[3] The struggle and tension in the operation of the American economy is reflected in the degree to which racketeers from successive ethnic groups have sought to exploit the economy to advance their social status through alliance with the established power structure.[4] Given the importance attached to the acquisition of wealth[5] and the

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1. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 182-185.

2. F. Tannenbaum, Crime and The Community, op. cit.

3. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, op. cit.: 143-144; K. Allsop, op. cit.; W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 183; F. Pearce, op. cit.: 121-124.

4. D. Bell, op. cit.: 129.

5. R.K. Merton, op. cit.; Irvin G. Wyllie, The Self-made Man In America: The Myth of Rags to Riches, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1954.

high concentration of economic power in a few hands and corporations in America,[1] organized crime has for decades provided an alternative avenue through which marginal elements have been able to achieve their 'American Dream' - the aquisition of wealth and power.

It is believed that the Anglo elements to the new world, later joined by the Scottish and Irish, were the pioneers of organized crime in the country.[2] By the turn of the century, however, the field had been broadened to include the Jews, Germans, Poles and others, and during the same period the Anglo elements had faded from the scene, to be replaced by the Irish. As each ethnic group acquired wealth and power and faded into respectability, its place was taken by the next immigrant arrival. Thus the Irish were succeeded by the Jews who in turn were succeeded by the Italians who are said to be in 'control' of the field since the twenties.

Although, in general, each ethnic group in its turn took to crime as part of the early adjustment to urban life, there were some ethnic groups - the Germans and Scandinavians, for example - who did not appear to have made significant contributions to the development of organized crime.[3]

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1. Estes Kefauver, In a Few Hands: Monopoly Power in America, New York, 1965. The monopoly of wealth by a few hands is almost a common phenomenon in most capitalist societies and is a concomitant of the ownership of the means of production; see R. Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society, London, 1980: 25; J.E. Mead, Efficiency, Equality and the Ownership of Property, London, 1964.

2. The activities of Roger Plant and Mike McDonald, both Englishmen, in establishing prostitution and gambling enterprises in Chicago are generally regarded as the models which their successors later emulated; J.L. Albini, op. cit.: 177-183.

3. D. Bell, op. cit., A. Bequai, op. cit.

Among those that did contribute, however, there appeared to be some degree of specialization. The Irish predominated in racketeering which derived from their importance as leaders of organized labour in general,[1] and in the operation of major gambling syndicates. The Irish politics - gambling complex remained intact until about World War One when developing black ghettos allowed black politicians and policy operators to build rival independent, gambling and political organizations linked to the Republicans in the 1920s and the Democratic city machines in the 1930s.[2]

Later Jewish wealth, among the East European immigrants, was apparently built in the garment trades, though with some involvement with the Jewish gangsters who were typically industrial racketeers.[3] Apart from their involvement in gambling and bootlegging, they made a special contribution to the organized underworld by providing professional or expert services, became a majority of the bailbondsmen in the cities, and constituted over half the fences who disposed of stolen goods.[4] This was, of course, closely related to Jewish predominance as junk dealers and their importance in retail

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1. For discussions of labour racketeering, see John Hutchinson, The Imperfect Union: A History of Corruption in American Trade Unions, New York, 1970, especially chapters 4 and 9; D. Bell. op.cit.: 'The Racket-Ridden Longshoremen: the Web of Economics and Politics', chapter 9: 175-209; with particular reference to Chicago, see Royal E. Montgomery, Industrial Relations in Chicago Building Trades, Chicago, 1970.

2. Mark H. Haller, 'Organized Crime in Urban Society: Chicago in the Twentieth Century', Jounal of Social History, 5, 1971-1972: 210-234; John Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, op. cit.: chapter 3.

3. D. Bell, op. cit.: 142.

4. M.H. Haller, op.cit.

trade.[1] They were also heavily over represented among defence lawyers and a small minority of them rose through politics and occasionally touched the fringes of crime.[2] The Italians, on the other hand, specialized in prostitution, and political protection often had to be arranged through Irish political leaders. Just as the Irish blocked Italians in politics, so also they blocked Italians in gambling which was both more respectable and more profitable than prostitution.[3]

Thus, as the latecomers to the field, the Italians initially 'found the more obvious big-city paths from rags to riches pre-empted'[4] by the Irish and Jews. Although Prohibition was an added bonanza to all gangsters in general, its main importance to the Italians actually lay in the fact that it provided them with an opportunity to break into a major field of organized crime that was not already monopolized by the Irish.[5] The success of organization

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1. It is unnecessary to emphasize that the entrepreneurial and professional services of the Jews reflected broader patterns of adaptation to American urban life; see, W.F. Ogburn and Clark Tibbitts, 'A memorandum on the Nativity of Certain Criminal Classes Engaged in Organized Crime' in Charles E. Merriam Papers, University of Chicago Library, Chicago, Illinois, July 30, 1930: 43.

2. D. Bell, op. cit.

3. For the accounts of the rise of the Capone Organization, see, John Kobler, Capone: the Life and World of Al Capone, London, 1971; F.D. Pasley, Al Capone: The Biography of a Self-Made Man, New York, 1930.

4. D. Bell, op. cit.: 142; Stuart L Hills, Crimes, Power and Morality: the Criminal Law Process in the U.S., Scranton, Pa., 1971: 109.

5. M.H. Haller, 'Organized Crime in Urban Society: Chicago in the twentieth century', Journal of Social History, 5, 1971-72:219. Prohibition enabled Italian Americans to challenge the Irish dominance in politics, business, labour unions and other areas which had hitherto been the preserve of the Irish.

brought wealth and power to many ambitious Italians and provided them with lush money in the late 1920s and early 1930s to move into gambling, racketeering, and entertainment, as well as a broad range of legitimate enterprises. Bootlegging allowed them, through entrepreneurial skills[1] and by assassinations of rivals, to gain a central position in the world of organized crime. With the massive capital which they accumulated during this period, the Italian racketeers were eventually able to break the Irish blockage in politics, and to influence the appointment of a number of Italian Americans to the judiciary. It is thought that most of the Italian judges in America in the 1940s and 1950s and beyond owe their positions to Frank Costello, a political power broker in New York.[2] Italians' high visibility in the field of organized crime up to the present time is probably due to the fact that the Irish and Jews have faded into respectability as they attained wealth and power, and probably because no other new ethnic group has seriously challenged their ascendancy.[3]

With the abolition of Prohibition in 1933, however, gambling once more surfaced as the major enterprise of organized crime,[4] along with narcotics trafficking. It

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1. Al Capone remarked in this regard, 'Prohibition is a business. All I do is to supply a public demand. I do it in the best and least harmful way I can'; see Kenneth Allsop, The Bootleggers and Their Era, Garden City, New York, 1961: 364.

2. D. Bell; op. cit.: 143-145.

3. F.A. Ianni, Black Mafia, New York, 1974.

4. M.H. Haller, op. cit.

cannot be seriously disputed that the Italians do not have a monopoly of these enterprises, and that perhaps the main beneficiaries of organized crime in America today are the 'respectable' members of the society in the crime network.[1] The symbiotic relationship between crime and politics which was fashioned in the last century has continued to remain the basis of organized crime in America. Despite the fact that most of the Italians who controlled the field in the fifties and sixties have since branched into legitimate businesses, the public continues to harp on the 'Mafia' as the sole purveyor of organized crime in the country. It is a view that often ignores the symbiotic relationship between crime and politics and their complex networks.

This symbiotic relationship between criminal syndicates and the established authorities, and the operation of the economy have admittedly been responsible for sustaining the persistence of organized crime in America. The extent to which the politicians, police, union leaders and businessmen in other capitalist societies are corrupt may vary from place to place. The variations, however important they may be,

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1. As late as 1978, a group of journalists and investigators declared that 'U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater, once a Republican presidential candidate, and his brother and a close friend have dominated Phoenix and Arizona for nearly thirty years while condoning the presence of organized crime through friendships and business alliances with mob figures.' At the same time, the governor of Maryland, Marvin Mandel, continuing the practice initiated by the former Vice-President, Spiro Agnew, was found guilty of fraud and racketeering while in office; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: IX.

should not obscure the fact that the systematic organization of illegal activities organized for continuing profits, rather than individual illegal acts,[1] is as characteristic of capitalism as bureaucracy is characteristic of the modern state.[2] This situation contrasts dramatically with the nature of individual corruption and black markets which can take place in every society. Such activities usually last for a short period and are terminated as soon as they are brought to the attention of the authorities. Recently, cases of such corruption and abuse of individual position were dealt with in the Soviet Union.[3] In one case, the offender who hoarded goods destined for the government warehouse was ordered to be shot.[4] This kind of punishment clearly demonstrates the degree of abhorence with which such activities are regarded in socialist societies.[5] There was apparently no suggestion that the offenders had any police or political protection in their activities. The crucial question here for our purposes is not whether a particular brand of crime can or cannot take place in a particular social system at any given time. Rather, the point is if it

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1. ibid; 129.

2. W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 184.

3. Mark Wood: Reuter News Agency, 'Gorbachev takes aim at cynicism, corruption', The Toronto Star, February 26, 1986: A16.

4. ibid.

5. In most socialist societies this kind of activity falls under the crime against the national economy; L. Salas, Social Control and Deviance in Cuba, New York, 1979: 66.

does take place, whether there would be interested and powerful forces that would sustain its existence and keep it thriving for decades or even centuries for their own political and economic ends. This is the crucial point and the answer to the question would clearly account for the pervasiveness of organized crime in capitalist in contrast to socialist societies. As the profits from organized crime are shared by the American syndicates and their 'respectable' masters, these tend to cement their relationships. These forces which stem from the system of adversary politics, police corruption, and the violently antagonistic relations between labour and capital basically pursue the same objectives as organized crime - the acquisition of wealth and power.

Meanwhile, speculations are rife as to which ethnic group in the country will be the next in line to succeed the Italians, whose role in organized crime is seen to be coming to an end.

The Future Successors

At the risk of sounding too presumptious, one can argue that organized crime will continue to be one of the avenues of upward mobility for fringe groups and individuals who occupy minority or lower class status in America. In the past each ethnic group in turn had used this queer ladder to achieve wealth and power through the control of local politics and then moved on to the status of respectability. It was a process that began with the Anglo elements who were succeeded by the Irish, and and who in turn were succeeded by the Jews who dominated the field until the beginning of the 1920s when the Italians forced them to 'abdicate'. Now that this last group has achieved wealth and power through their involvement in organized crime, and the majority of them have entered the legitimate pathways to respectability, their role in organized crime has noticeably started to decline. The question now is whether organized crime will continue to afford upward social mobility to ethnic groups and, if so, which group or groups will take over from the Italians.

Some observers of the American organized crime scene are of the view that the Blacks and Hispanics are the most likely on the drawing board.[1]

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1. The indiscriminate use of the term 'mafia' among most American writers can be seen here where Sealey refers to the influence of the blacks in future syndicated crime as the coming of a 'Black mafia', see Pat Sealey, 'Negroes Get Rung on Mafia Ladder', The Miami Herald, March 12, 1968: 1.

There are, however, some organizational, technical and political problems which these groups must overcome before they can hope to take over from the Italians. Currently, the two groups appear to lack strategic political connections which helped the previous ethnic groups in their quest for the American dream. Their hold on political power appears tenuous and has yet to be consolidated. At present their crime networks are excluded from the larger markets, and are mainly confined to the ghettos. A similar situation prevailed against the Italians when they were shut out by the Irish in the earlier part of the century until Prohibition provided a source for extra-ghetto profit and political power enabled the Italian gangsters to challenge the Irish domination.[1] These crime networks apparently lack effective control over large sectors of criminal enterprises within as well as outside the ghetto. The two groups also appear to lack organizational mechanism that could bring their disparate networks together into large active, criminal organizations capable of exercising effective control.[2]

Just as the Irish and Italians were able to dominate organized crime in America through their domination of municipal politics, it is likely that the recent election of several Black mayors and other public Black and Hispanic officials across the nation[3] will enable them to wield power in the political machine and place them in a position of

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1. Mark Haller, 'Organized Crime in Urban City', op. cit.: 219.

2. Francis J. Ianni, Black Mafia: Ethnic Succession in Organized Crime, New York, 1974: 316-317.

3. For analyses of the votimg power of blacks, see Rod Bush (ed), The New Black Vote: Politics and Power in four American cities, San Francisco, 1984; Ernest Patterson, Black City Politics, New York, 1974; M.B. Preston, L.J. Henderson and P. Puryear (eds), The Search for Political Power, New York, 1982.

vote brokers . However, since machine politics is declining in the country, it is likely that Black and Hispanic crime networks will not be afforded the use of urban machines for upward mobility to the same degree as their forerunners.[1] However, it would appear that the political machines will continue to offer them limited representation as was true in the past.[2] For years it has long been recognized by Black leaders that the urban poor are among the worst victims of organized crime, and the Blacks who constitute the greater portion of these victims have been urged to take control of the operations of vices in their community, and to turn them into economic enterprises, while eliminating those they consider to be most harmful to the psychological health of the community.[3] However, some pundits believe that a black man 'has a better chance of being elected mayor of Selma, Alabama, than moving into the big money with syndicates'.[4]

Despite this gloomy prediction, one should not forget that in America, ethnic groups often succeed to political power before they succeed in crime, and that the two forms of mobility invariably go together. With the decline in machine

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1. See, for instance, Bruce M. Stave and Sondra A. Stave (eds.), Urban Bosses, Machines, and Progressive Reformers, Malabar, Florida, 1984.

2. Elmer E. Cormwell, Jr., Bosses, Machines and Ethnic Groups', The Annals of American Academy.353 (May, 1964): 27-39.

3. Reaction of the Congress of Racial Equality to police corruption and victimization of the urban poor by organized crime, at its 1967 annual convention at Oakland, California, cited in D.R. Cressey, Theft of The Nation, op. cit.: 197.

4. Nicholas Gage Column: The Wall Street Journal, October 26, 1967.

5. D. Bell, op. cit: 191-192.

politics, however, it is most likely that political protection for future syndicate operators will probably be more frequently obtained through direct payoffs to the police and politicians of the crime networks than reliance on machine politics. This symbiotic accommodation which largely sustained the existence of the mafia phenomenon in Sicily has also been reponsible for the sustenance and existence of syndicated crime in America. Given the fact that narcotics trafficking is becoming more lucrative than gambling (considering the legalization of gambling in most States), and given its international connections, it is equally possible that eventually no one ethnic group would be able to dominate organized crime in the country when the Italians finally vacate the field.

Often overlooked when considering potential ethnic successors to organized crime in America are the ethnic Chinese. As Robertson notes, American Law enforcement agents have for so long overlooked self-effacing Chinese in their midst because the 'mafia' loomed so perilously large.[1] Their activities in recent years in drug trafficking have attracted the attention of law enforcers, and it is believed they are a potent force to be reckoned with in this area, giv en their connections with their relatives in Hong Kong and Southeast Asian countries who control most of the heroin originating in the Golden Triangle.[2]

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1. F. Robertson, Triangle of death, op. cit.: 77.

2. A.W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, New York, 1972: 185-6, 223, 237-41.

It is noted that they have clannishness and reticence which helped the Sicilian mafiosi and American syndicates to become successful.[1] If they can succeed to political power, their vastly superior international connections and contacts[2] would certainly place them in a serious position as competitors to the blacks and Hispanics, especially in the areas of drug trafficking and loansharking. But as the experience of the Irish and other previous ethnic groups would indicate, in America ethnic groups usually succeed to political power, which affords protective shield, before they can succeed in crime. Unlike black and Hispanic Americans who have been elected to important political positions since the 1970s, Chinese Americans have so far shown no eagerness for public office. With the decline in machine politics in the country, it would appear that their only way to achieve success in the field of organized crime would be through direct payoffs to the established legal authorities for the permission to operate. As the field and its operations become more sophisticated, rather than having one single ethnic group at a time dominate the field as in the past, it is conceivale that there would be several of them attempting to use organized crime to improve their social status. The field is becoming a kind of asphalt jungle where anybody can always find his way if he has the necessary political and police connections. Organized crime will probably continue to attract some minority groups as one of the queer ladders of social mobility,[3] as it is fed by the growing profits from drug trafficking, gambling, loansharking and other kinds of vice.

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1. F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981: 78, 197-228.
2. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 30.
3. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, op. cit.: 129.

Conclusion

Organized crime in America derives its matrix from certain characteristics of the society and can be viewed as a form of competition and struggle, rather than conspiracy, waged by successive ethnic groups and immigrants in the illicit sector of the country's economy, through the control of urban politics which often results in the achievement of wealth and power which are defined as the 'American dream'. The preoccupation with the 'Mafia' as the sole purveyor of organized crime has created a dangerous distortion and obstacle in understanding the true nature of organized crime in the country. As argued in this chapter, it would appear that the 'mafia' currently plays very little role in the country's syndicated crime and that the real power behind organized crime in the country is the crooked politicians, law enforcement officials, union leaders, businessmen, prosecutors and judges in a coalition with the racketeers. These participants that make up the crime network have shared financial interests which help to maintain and ensure mutual cooperation among the members of the network and those who work for it. This symbiotic accommodation between the racketeers and 'respectable' members of the network is maintained through a system of payoffs and 'campaign contributions' and it works to the advantage of both parties.

More importantly, these 'respectable' members use organized crime as servant to maintain financial, economic, and political domination of the society.

It has been suggested that black and Hispanic Americans may be the next ethnic groups to use organized crime to attain social mobility when the Italians fade away from the scene. We have suggested that ethnic Chinese could also be a potential force in the battle to succeed Italians, given their international connections and contacts which place them on a more advantageous postition than Black and Hispanic Americans. There are, however certain political and organizational problems to be surmounted before these groups can hope to succeed the Italians. For some members of these ethnic groups, organized crime constitutes an alternative avenue to getting their share of American wealth. The operation of the American economy admittedly supplies the basis of accomodation between organized criminals and officials in the power structure. This situation may vary from one capitalist society to another. The variations, however important they may be, do not obscure the fact that the systematic organization of illegal activities and illicit goods and services for continuing profits, rather than individual illegal acts, is a characteristic of capitalism as bureaucracy is characteristic of modern states.

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ORGANIZED CRIME IN CANADA

Introduction

Organized crime has existed in Canada for several decades but it was only in the last two and a half decades that concern about it began to be expressed in the form of public inquiries on its activities and the extent of its connections with the respectable members of the society and its establishments. Organized crime in Canada is to a large extent influenced by the existence of the same phenomenon in the United States where it has enjoyed more than a century of longevity, despite public inquiries and commissions to deal with it. The operations of the phenomenon in the two countries, however, appear to differ in many areas. Unlike the American which is as vast in scope as the country itself and is capable of penetrating every facet of American life, organized crime in Cananda appears to be concentrated mainly in the three big Canadian cities.

The preponderance of individuals and groups with Italian-sounding names in the Canadian operation has led early investigators to the conclusion that organized crime in Canada is a branch of the American and that it is controlled, as it is claimed in the U.S., by the American 'Mafia', a view we consider to be possibly misleading. This study examines recent investigations whch indicate that the phenomenon in Canada cuts across all ethnic lines and which cast some doubt on the branch plant and 'Mafia' control theory. It examines how the operation of organized crime differs in the two countries in terms of its intensity and pervasiveness, and

the three clear areas where organized crime and its connections with Canadian society resemble what prevail in the United States. It argues that the branch plant theory would be inconsistent with the way independent, loose associations are known to operate of which organized crime is a prototype.

The Branch Plant Theory

For years, Canadian policy makers and planners, along with their U.S. counterparts, have been in a muddle in conceptualizing the phenomenon of organized crime and this was mainly caused by the tawdry romance these officials perenially enjoy in viewing organized crime in terms of the 'Mafia' and alien conspiracy as a method for explaining issues perceived as social problems. Prior to the mid 1970s, organized crime in Canada was viewed as a spill-over from the United States and, according to the police, a branch plant operation controlled by members of the 'mafia' gangs south of the border.[1] The reports of the commission of enquiries into organized crime conducted by law enforcement officials in the 1960s and early 1970s in the provinces of Ontario[2] and British Columbia[3] consistently maintained that organized crime in the country was a branch plant operation of the U.S. phenomenon, and that the 'mafia' was the sole

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1. Report of the Ontario Police Commission on Organized Crime, Toronto, Ontario, January 31, 1964.

2. ibid.

3. Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU): Initial Report on Organized Crime in British Columbia, Department of Attorney General of B.C., October, 1974.

controller of the operation. The reports, however, were remarkable for what the commissioners failed to do: they failed to investigate the symbiotic relationship, if any, between the organized criminals or the syndicates and the 'respectable' members and institutions of Canadian society; what role the former play in relation to the latter, and how these criminals gained their power and fortunes.

Even though Al Capone-type crime is distinctly American, something like it does exist not only in Canada but also in other territories adjacent to the United States.[1] For years, major Canadian cities like Vancouver, Toronto, and especially Montreal have been choice staging points and operational bases for the international traffick in drugs. The closeness of the U.S. market and the affinities of Canadian gangsters for drug smugglers in other countries are believed to have made major Canadian cities one of the most active and important links in this international commerce.[2] In the 1970s organized crime networks in Canada, especially in Montreal and Toronto, featured many Canadians of Italian origin whose links and interactions with their American counterparts obviously created an appearance of a vast international conspiracy of monopoly and control of organized crime activities by one ethnic group, with Canada serving as supposedly a branch plant.

No one can say with certainty the exact nature of the relationship between the two groups on both sides of the

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1. J.A. Mack with H. Kerner, The Crime Industry, Westmead, 1975: 5.

2. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, The Canadian Connection, trans. from the French by James Stewart, Montreal, 1976: X111.

border; but whether this liaison should be viewed in terms of interactions between employees at a branch plant and their officials at the headquarters, vassals and their overlords, or strictly interactions between individuals and groups engaged in the same business is still open to debate. The police authorities, however, take the view that American syndicates not only control the existing criminal organizations in Canada but have also expanded their activities there.[1] For some time after the Kefauver inquiry in the United States, the police Commission report states, several of the syndicates in the eastern U.S. moved their headquarters into eastern Canada because it was impossible to place a bet east of Chicago that was not cleared through Canada. It maintains that it was a matter of strategic move which enabled the American gangsters to evade U.S. law enforcement efforts.[2] However, the report concedes that none of these operations brought the power of the syndicates into Canada for the purpose of taking over control of organized crime in Canada. It nevertheless claims that this picture is changing and that the American syndicates are showing an increasing interest in Canada and are moving to take over direct control of some existing criminal organizations and to expand their criminal activities. They are already active in the field of gambling, narcotics trafficking, counterfeiting and the protection racket, the Commission report claims.[3]

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1. Report of the Ontario Police Commission on Organized Crime, op. cit.: 131.

2. ibid.

3. ibid.

In conclusion, the report asserts that 'there are many indications, and there is some evidence, that the American syndicates have already started to treat Canada as an area for expansion of their activities'.[1] The claim by any one country that its organized crime problem is imported from abroad is basically a standard one and there is nothing new about it;[2] it is often designed to assuage the moral sentiments of the people, especially where the crime networks contain a high proportion of one newly-arrived ethnic group. Such a claim also provides an easy rationalization on the part of the police and politicians for their inability to successfully deal with the problem.

In the mid 1970s, however, two more inquiries in Canada into organized crime were conducted which, through the techniques and methods the inquirers employed, shed a better light into the activities and identities of organized criminals than the earlier investigations by the police commissions in Ontario and British Columbia. The first of these was the Quebec Commission of Inquiry on organized crime[3] of 1975 during which time many victims of organized crime in the province appeared and testified under oath as to how they had been subjected to regular 'protection' payments by the urban gangsters; the cash payoffs made to some crooked

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1. ibid.

2. While Canadian authorities would like to view organized crime in Canada as a spill-over from the U.S., some American authorities and writers have long maintained that theirs was imported from Sicily. The view does not of course appear to take into account the existence of organized crime in the U.S. prior to the 1920s when Italian Americans played a very little role in the scene; see A. Bequai, Organized Crime: the Fifth Estate, Lexington, Mass., 1979: 19; Ed Reid, Mafia: Cosa Nostra Syndicate, New york, 1964.

3. Quebec Commission of Inquiry on Organized Crime, Attorney General's office, Quebec City, 1975.

police officials by vice operators, the resale by corrupt police officials to the public of narcotics seized from drug traffickers; and the alliance of some city politicians with organized crime network members.[1] The inquiry also revealed, contrary to the general belief that the members of the 'mafia' controlled and monopolized all organized crime in the country, that other ethnic groups are also involved in organized crime networks.[2] The second and a nation-wide enquiry lasting three years and costing over one million dollars was undertaken by select staff of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which released their findings in a two-90 minute documentary in June 1977[3]

Utilizing the enormous resources of the Network, the investigators were able to dig further and travel more extensively than any independent researcher or organization with limited means would be able to accomplish. The investigators interviewed some defectors from crime networks who had their voices and faces altered so as to prevent any possible identification, while others appeared hooded while answering questions from the investigators. Although the investigators accepted everything the defectors told them at face value, one must not forget that defectors are often given to exaggerations

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1. ibid.

2. ibid.

3. The salient parts of the findings in this investigation were released to the public by the CBC Networks and were called 'Connections: An Investigation into Organized Crime in Canada', on the 12th and 13th. June, 1977. By the kind permission of the CBC Management, the writer was able to view the entire documentary for the second time at their studio in Toronto.

in order to impress the officials.[1] Using hidden night cameras and microfilms, the investigators interviewed and filmed some of the active members of the crime networks in the cities they visited; much of their filming, however, was done from camouflaged vehicles using a new lens that could shoot in the dark and magnify available light 80,000 times. Though the focus of the enquiry was on Canada, the investigators visited more than thirty cities in America, in addition to ten Canadian cities; and two of the investigators, William MacAdam and Martin Burke, traveled as far afield as Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Marseilles, London and Sicily to run down leads and examine how the various crime network 'connections' interlock. Through their superior resources and the fact that they were not law-enforcement officials, the investigators were able to penetrate where law enforcers would never dare to tread. As a result, their investigation appeared to produce better results than those of the police commissions indicated earlier on.

The investigators, however, could not resist the popular term 'mafia' in describing the members of the crime networks, ostensibly because most of them had Italian-sounding names and because the term has always had a magic appeal in North America. Their conclusions, nevertheless, revealed that the crime networks in the country also include members of other ethnic groups, 'respectable' office holders and institutions,

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1. Morris and Hawkins, for instance, who analysed Valachi's testimony before the Senate Crime Commitee in the U.S. found a great deal of inconsistencies in his testimony: M. Morris and G. Hawkins (eds), The Honest Politicians Guide to Crime Control, Chicago, 1970: 214; G. Hawkins, 'God and the Mafia', The Public Interest, volume 14, 1969.

and that the members of the crime networks are in constant interactions and communications with their counterparts in America, Europe and elsewhere. Despite this, the investigators, however, leaned towards the 'branch plant operation' theory advanced earlier by the police commission even though their own findings would not support such a conclusion.[1] In many ways, however, their findings contrast with those of the police commissions which made the 'mafia' the central focus of their investigation and whose findings could be seen as a rationalization of preconceived opinion. The investigators also interviewed some victims of organized crime: individuals who were swindled of their money in non-existent stocks; those who had been forced to make regular payments by mobsters for 'protection';[2] a gang leader who had lost most of his men in a war with a rival crime network, and victims of loansharking, etc. In one incident, we hear the actual recorded phone call from a loan shark , recorded by his victim in Montreal, warning him, 'If your kids get hit with bullets tonight, that is your fault'.[3] The victim told the investigators that he had paid $10,000 interest on a $300 loan, and that as the interest continued to multiply weekly and as he had no money to pay, he was refusing further payment. In other recorded phone calls we hear the syndicates making drug deals, tapes of mobsters posing as federal agents to bilk little old ladies of their savings,[4] and so on.

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1. Canadian organized crime, like its American counterpart, is a motley of ethnic groups as revealed by all the inquiries, among them Italians, French-Canadians, Greeks, Yugoslavs, the Irish, Chinese, and others, with the Italians featuring prominently in the three large cities; The Toronto Star, June 14, 1977; A. Bequai, op. cit., 17.

2. ' Connection: An Investigation into Organized Crime in Canada,, Part I, June 12, 1977.

3. ibid.

4. ibid,

These and many other instances uncovered during the CBC Network's investigations clearly cast serious doubts on the 'branch plant' theory, for many of the men involved in these criminal activities are indigenous Canadians with no Italian-sounding names and certainly no connection with the so-called 'mafia'.[1] Canada, like any other capitalist country, is capable of producing as many organized criminals as the illicit sector of the economy can generate, and does no longer have to look to the United States for its hoods and drug smugglers, loansharks and the rest. Organized crime in Canada as revealed by the various inquiries appears to follow the pattern which is observed in most capitalist countries where the phenomenon exists, and it consists of such rackets as drug trafficking, loansharking, bookmaking, illegal gambling, prostitution and pimping, smuggling, fencing, political graft and corruption, extortion and labour racketeering.[2] Since the late 1970s when the playing of lotteries was legalized in all the provinces but one, with the winnings being tax-free, narcotics trafficking and smuggling appear to have replaced gambling as the most lucrative of the enterprises. These organized criminal activities operating in the illegal sectors can be viewed as a developmental adjunct to the general system of Canadian private profit economy[3] and are similar to those operating in the United States. Despite the similarities, however, there are definite differences which mark the operation of illicit industries in Canada from those of the United States.

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1. Jack Ackroyd, Chief of Toronto Police, 'Organized crime in Canada is not the domain of any one ethnic group'. The Toronto Star, March 15, 1984: A5.

2. Report on Organized Crime in Ontario, op. cit.: 64.

3. See, for instance, G.B. Vold, Theoretical Criminology, New York, 1958: 221-242.

A Difference of Degree

Almost all the organized criminal activities for which the United States has been noted world-wide are also found in Canada. The significant differences, however, appear to concern more the degree of their pervasiveness and intensity of operation in the two countries. The alliance of politics and crime in America at local and national levels dating back to the 1920s and beyond has been a hallmark of American politics.[1] It has been the vehicle through which the Republican and Democratic political machines have received at one time or another their political campaign funds from members of the crime networks in return for permission to operate.[2] Campaign 'donations' by gangsters to individuals running for political office from the alderman to the president has long been an American phenomenon.[3] In Canada, however there have been no documented cases of a political party allying itself with, or receiving campaign contributions from, organized criminals; in a few cases recently where politics and crime got entangled, they involved only individual politicians and not a political machine.[4] The pursuit of the 'American Dream'[5] -

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1. See, among others, J. Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, Chicago, 1968, especially chapters 3, 4, and 8. Ed Reid, The Shame of New York, Scranton, Pa., 1953; W.J. Chambliss, On The Take: From Petty Crooks to Presidents, Indiana, 1982.

2. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, Organizing Crime, New York, 1981: 105-114; F. Tannenbaum, Crime and the Community, Boston, 1978.

3. The American government at all levels is largely a matter of pressure-group politics; the power and influence wielded by the syndicates might reasonably be regarded as simply an extension of the non-criminal pressure-group system; J.A. Mack, op. cit.: 175.

4. These cases are treated here under the heading of 'Political Connection'.

5. For a full treatment of the American Dream, see I. Wyllie, The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches, New Brunswick, N.J., 1954.

wealth and power - so much woven into the national ethos has often induced successive ethnic groups and individuals to resort to organized crime to nail down their dream.[1] Since the achievement of the dream is shared not only by urban dwellers but also by those living in towns and villages, organized crime in America is not simply a phenomenon of the big cities only as it is in Canada.

The American syndicates have always had an uncanny success in penetrating not only the politicians but also the police officials and the judiciary. Cash payoffs to the police and politicians[2] have been the principal mechanism by which the syndicates in America have retained the goodwill of these officials and which assure them of immunity from prosecution in the course of their operation. This practice which is widespread in the United States also exists to a lesser degree in Canada at municipal and provincial levels. It has been shown that some politicians have supported organized crime figures in deportation and parole hearings, and that those connected with organized crime are not shy about trying to influence politicians, sometimes by making 'friendly donations' to their campaign funds.[3] The inquiries in Ontario and Quebec also revealed a pattern of cash payoffs by organized crime figures to the police.[4] The alliance between the American syndicates and their lawyers usually ensures a quick 'fix', that is, an

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1. Bell has appropriately characterized organized crime in this regard as 'a queer ladder of social mobility'; D. Bell, 'Crime as an American Way of Life', The Antioch Review, 13, June 1953.

2. W.J. Chambliss: On the Take, op. cit.; Block and Chambliss, op. cit.; F. Tannebaum, Crime and the Community, op. cit.

3. Don Dutton and Cal Millar, 'Organized Crime', The Toronto Star, March 5, 1984: A1, A5.

4. ibid; Organized Crime in Ontario, op.cit; Quebec Commission of Inquiry on Organized Crime, op. cit.

arrangement by which the syndicate safeguards himself from arrest, or conviction, or imprisonment by the lavish use of first rate lawyers.[1] Although the system of 'fix' is still a novelty in Canada, the Ontario Police Inquiry notes that some lawyers practising in the province have participated in the activities of their clients who were in association with the members of the crime networks.[2]

The activities of the American syndicates have traditionally been distinguished by their incredible degree of violence and intimidation resulting from their extra-legal status. Their efforts to maintain internal and inter-syndicate order and territorial monopoly have usually driven them, in the absence of any recourse to the public law, to a systematic use of violence ranging from roughing-up to murder. While New York City and Chicago, among others, have exemplified these activities in the United States, in recent years Montreal and Toronto in Canada have been getting their small share of this bogus distinction.[3] The police believe that the recent rash of murders of well-known syndicates in the two cities was as a

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1. 'The Big Fix' in G. Tyler (ed.), Organized Crime in America: A. Book of Readings, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1962; J.A. Mack, op,cit.: 35.

2. Organized Crime in Ontario op. cit.: 106.

3. In the current case in Montreal before the court, six bodies of the members of the motorcycle gang were recovered by the police from the bottom of a river near Montreal. The victims, which were riddled with bullets and chained to heavy objects, are believed by the police to have been shot by the gang members for misuse of money from drug sales, according to the police informer who managed to escape the execution. More than ten members of the gang picked up in Montreal and Halifax are currently in custody for the murders: The Toronto Star, November 12, 1985: A4: For the activities of the U.S. warring gangsters over the control of criminal operations and territories, see K. Allsop, The Bootleggers and their Era, Garden City, New York, 1961; A. Bequai, Organized Crime, op. cit.; B. Trukus and S. Feder, Murder, Inc.: The Story of the Syndicate, London, 1952; J. Landesco, op. cit., among others. Also see M. McIntosh, The Organization of Crime, London, 1975:56.

result of power and territorial struggle for the control of the lucrative narcotics trade.[1]

The diversification of resources into legitimate businesses by the syndicates is seen by the officials of the United States as an invasion and subversion of legitimate business which constitutes a major threat to the political and economic system of the country because the invasion is undertaken, in the officials' view, with criminal intent.[2] In Canada, on the other hand, some well known syndicates have also legitimate businesses, probably as a front, and there has been no outcry by the officials that their operations constitute an invasion and subversion of legitimate business.[3] The 'invasion and subversion' theory can be viewed as an extension of the 'conspiracy' theory in the United States which sees a sinister plot in any undertaking by a syndicate,no matter how legitimate, and often is couched in a moral tone designed to disguise a social hypocrisy.[4] It has been noted

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1. Police records indicate that over forty seven gangsters have lost their lives in gangland slayings in Toronto in the last ten years, and more than that number have died in Montreal 'without a pillow under their heads', The Toronto Star, March 3, 1984: A1, A10; November 15, 1984: A15.

2. D.R. Cressey, Theft of The Nation: The Structure and Operations of Organized Crime in America, New York, 1969: 95-108.

3. Domenic Racco, a well known Toronto mobster whose murder in Dec. 1983 was linked to the earlier slaying of a Toronto gangster Paul Volpe in November 1983, owned a thriving bakery industry, probably as a front, and so do the Dubois brothers of Montreal who operate tavern establishments; The Toronto Star, December 13, 1983: A14; CBC Organized Crime: 'Connections', Part 2, June 13, 1977.

4. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, New York, 1967: 148-149.

that in the United States most key industries have become at one time or another the province of power syndicates as a result of the often violently antagonistic relations between labour and capital, workers and bosses.[1] This situation explains the traditional alliance betwen the management and racketeers in the labour unions who receive regular payments from the management in return for an undertaking to maintain labour peace in their ranks; through such an alliance under-the-table deals are made, sweet-heart contracts are reached and the workers are cheated of their fair wages.[2] In addition to the labour-management racketeering, most American industries are often subjected to 'protection' payment while union workers face the problem of professional strike-breakers hired by the enployers who usually support the politician; with the result that politicians persuade the police to side with employers.[3] All these labour-management racketeering activities also exist in Canada though to a lesser extent. In a most recent case involving the Consumers Distributing of Toronto, the company pleaded guilty in court to paying more than a quarter of a million dollars in illegal kickbacks to a Toronto official of the Teamster's Union for 'labour peace' over a period of many months.[4]

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1. Block and Chambliss, op. cit.: 65.

2. For a more detailed account of industrial and labour racketeerng in the U.S., see F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance, London, 1976: 131-146, 152-156; D. Bell, op. cit.: 'The Racket-Ridden Longshoremen: The Web of Economics and Politics', 175-209.

3. ibid.

4. The Toronto Star; 'Company paid Teamster $255,000 for Labour Peace,' June 20, 1985: A1.

It can be argued, as the records of the two countries have shown, that all the various kinds of organized crime which exist in the United States also exist in Canada; the difference is basically one of degree. In one area at least, drug smuggling and trafficking, Canada appears to have a clear edge over the United States as a result of its enormous size and sparse population which enable smuggling boats, ships and planes to land with comparitively little risk.[1] On the other hand, organized crime in Canada does not appear to enjoy the deep-rooted support which it finds across a broad spectrum of all segments of American society. But like its counterpart in America, however, organized crime in Canada has its own networks and connections which lend it support and through which its activities are sustained. But unlike in the U.S. where the phenomenon exists not only in big but also in medium-sized cities and small towns, organized crime in Canada appears to be concentrated mainly in the three large cities of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.[2]

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1. Canada is the second largest country in the world after the Soviet union, but has a population almost equal to one-tenth of that of the United States.

2. Report of the Ontario Police Commission. op. cit.

The Toronto Network

Metropolitan Toronto, the most populous and prosperous city in Ontario and Canada, is believed to have been for years an attractive field for those engaged in organized crime.[1] Organized crime activities consisting mainly of narcotics trafficking, gambling, prostitution,[2] sales of phony stocks and disposal of stolen goods and bonds have long been dominated by men with Italian-sounding names, leading many people to believe that organized crime in this city is a preserve of the 'mafia' organization. The close association which has existed between the Toronto crime networks and the Buffalo networks in the U.S. has also led the police in Canada to theorize that the Toronto network is actually 'a branch of the Buffalo networks'.[3] Against that view it should be stated that people in the same business usually have need for close association with one another. The strategic position of Metropolitan Toronto has made it possible for the activities of its crime networks often to be felt throughout southern Ontario, including such cities as Hamilton, Niagara Falls, Ottawa, Guelph, and London, Ontario.[4]

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1. Organized Crime in Ontario, op. cit.: 70.

2. It should be noted that there is no legal sanction in Canada against acts of prostituion as such, that is, the offering of one's body commonly for lewdness in return for payment. However, four related sections are sanctioned. Soliciting in a public place and transporting a person to a bawdy-house are subject to summary convictions, while keeping a common bawdy-house and 'procuring' a person for prostitution are considered indictable offences; Canadian Criminal Code Part 5, sections 179, 270.

3. Organized Crime in Ontario, op. cit.: 36-37.

4. ibid.

In spite of the previous reassurances of the Ontario government, metropolitan Toronto is now a mob city, as shown by the recent revelations and inter-syndicate feuds.[1] Its crime networks have become so powerful that they should no longer be considered a subsidiary of the Buffalo organization and it is one of the open cities in North America where more than one crime network can exist and operate. In the 1950s and early 1960s when Italian Americans featured prominently in the U.S. rackets, organized crime in Toronto was said to be dominated by the crime networks of Alberto and Vito Agueci and Dan Gasbarini.[2] According to Hamilton Spectator, Gasbarini was one of eight Canadians named as smugglers and suppliers of narcotics in Canada by a Buffalo police officer testifying at the Senate Crime Investigating Subcommittee hearings in Washington in 1963.[3] The networks, based in Toronto and Hamilton, were reported to be closely associated with the Stefano Magadino network of Buffalo.[4] Gasbarini himself admitted to the Spectator that he ran a wide-open gambling enterprise in Hamilton and that it was only closed 'when the police stopped looking the other way',[5] apparently as a result of his failure to keep up with payoffs. In the view of the police, the Magadino gang is so powerful and ruthless that it has been able to exercise an almost indisputable control

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1. Organized Crime: 'Connections' op. cit.: Part I, June 12, 1977.

2. Organized Crime in Ontario, op. cit.: 36.

3. Hamilton Spectator, October 18, 1963.

4. Organized Crime in Ontario, op. cit.

5. Hamilton Spectator, op. cit.

over southern Ontario networks from its base in Buffalo.[1] They cite the disappearance of Peter Mitchell in October 1959 in Toronto and the murder of Alberto Agueci in 1961, both well-known gamblers and narcotics smugglers, as resulting from the victims' refusal to cooperate with this powerful network.[2]

In recent years, however, it has been noted that John Papalia, whose network began in the 1960s, is now the head of a criminal organization that stretches across Canada from its base in Toronto and Hamilton and which operates gambling, narcotics trafficking, counterfeiting, stock racketeering, stills operation, extortion and protection rackets, prostitution and smuggling of all descriptions.[3] His incredible success is said to have been the result of his ablility to cooperate with the powerful Magadino network. His only rival is believed to be Max Bluestein whose network is known to control one of the most profitable operations in Toronto and who is said to have refused to accept the Magadino's gang as a partner in his illegal gambling operations. The failure of Magadino's effort to gain total control over organized crime in Toronto is attributed by the police to the stiff opposition from Bluestein and his network.[4] The inter-syndicate conflict betwen Papalia and Bluestein is believed to have resulted largely from the opposing stand the two men took with regards to the Magadino gang.[5]

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1. Organized Crime in Ontario, op. cit.
2. ibid: 45.
3. ibid: 64.
4. ibid: 70-71.
5. ibid: 62.

Other crime networks in Toronto which have attracted public attention in recent years and whose blood feuds and intersyndicate rivalries have resulted in several gangland murders are those of the late Paul Volpe, Cosimo Elia Commisso, and Mike Racco, the last two being in alliance and closely associated with the Violi network of Montreal as well as being in opposition to the Volpe network.[1] Volpe, a millionaire who controlled a large portion of drug trade, gambling and other vices in metro Toronto, was found murdered, his body stuffed in the boot of his wife's Mercedes Benz car parked at the Pearson International Airport in November 1983.[2] The police speculated that the killing was part of an attempt by two gangland 'enforcers' to gain control of the drug trade and illegal gambling operations in the city for a local underworld 'family' linked to crime networks in Montreal.[3] Prior to this muder, Cosimo Commisso had pleaded guilty in August 1981, to conspiring to kill Volpe by hiring a hit man who turned police informer.[4]

In what was seen as a revenge less than a month later, Domenic Racco, son of Mike Racco, was found murdered in December 1983 and his bullet-riddled body was dumped on a lonely railway siding, with bullets in his head and chest.[5]

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1. CBC: 'Connections', Part 1, June 12, 1977.

2. 'Gangland slaying of Paul Volpe a year-old puzzle', The Toronto Star, November 15, 1984: A15.

3. ibid.

4. ibid.

5. 'Mobster's death linked to dope trade', The Toronto Star, December 13, 1983: A14.

Through wiretaps the police were able to pick up three members of Volpe's network living in Hamilton who were later tried and convicted of conspiracy to murder young Racco, two of them receiving twelve years and the third five years.[1] As has been noted, at least forty-seven people have been murdered in the Toronto area in the past decade in what observers and police view as inter-syndicate struggle for control of Ontario's two billion dollar underworld business.[2] As in most gangland murders, twenty-nine of these remain unsolved, according to the police record.[3] Organized crime in Toronto appears to be more sophisticated than is usually thought and recent information regarding the existence of sophisticated production and distribution networks based in Toronto would clearly indicate that Toronto is rapidly replacing California as the production capital of metamphetamine crystals and powder.[4]

Finally, Chinatown in Toronto, the second largest in Canada which once led a more lawful existence than most other ethnic groups, has, since the late 1960s, become the scene of increasing organized criminal activities and is no longer defined by its service business.[5] With the rewriting of the

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1. 'Three jailed for the 1983 plot to murder Metro mobster: We will take him for a ride - threat picked up on wiretap', The Toronto Star, February 19, 1985: A11.

2. 'A 3-month probe by The Star reveals organized crime is a two billion dollars industry',The Toronto Star, March 3, 1984: 1.

3. The Toronto Star, March 5, 1984: 1, 'Deaths Unsolved'.

4. CBC: 'Connections', Part 1, June 12, 1977.

5. F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981: 232.

immigration laws in Canada in 1967 the floodgates of immigration from the Far East were thrown open. The new flood of immigrants, unlike the old settlers, is said to contain a large proportion of organized criminals who have ties with criminal organizations back home in Hong Kong, and they are believed to be largely responsible for a large portion of heroin appearing on the streets of Boston and New York, smuggled from Toronto.[1] A new criminal type of Triad Society called the Kung Lok, affiliated to the 14K[2] in Hong Kong, is said to have opened up its headquarters in Toronto and has been active in other areas of organized criminal activity, besides drug trafficking and smuggling.[3]

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1. ibid.: 233.

2. The numerals indicate the rank or position of the official, and the letter of the society to which he belongs, W.P. Morgan, Triad Societies in Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1982.

3. F. Bresler, op. cit.

The Montreal Networks

In the history of organized crime in Canada, Montreal and Toronto occupy on a lower scale the positions which New York and Chicago occupy in the United States. For the past sixty years or so Montreal has been one of the North American continent's major ports for heroin imports and most other narcotics,[1] a nerve centre of all kinds of organized criminal activities that spill over to most Canadian cities. Like Chicago and New York, Montreal has had its own inter-syndicate blood feuds and gangland wars for territorial control of criminal operations.[2] In the 1920s and 1930s, during the period of Prohibition in the U.S., Montreal, along with Toronto and Vancouver, was among the major Canadian cities that American syndicates used as staging points for transportation of illicit liquor into the U.S.[3] Like Toronto to its west, the activities of organized criminals in Montreal have been closely associated with those of their counterparts in the northeast of the United States and until relatively recently these activities were viewed in most cases as those of the American syndicates expanding into Canada.[4] This inescapable

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1. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.

2. 'Montreal gangland figure slain', Washington Post, January 23, 1978: A-4; A. Bequai, op. cit.: 17; For the account of the inter-syndicate feuds between the McSween gang and the Dubois gang, the Dubois gang and the Devil's Disciples, and between the Cotroni organization and other gangs, see J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.: 40, 88, 501-504; The Montreal Star, 'Murdered McSweens were gang 'dummies', December 8, 1975: 1.

3. J.L. Albini. The American Mafia: Genesis of a Legend, New York, 1979: 200; Jefferson Farjeon, The Compleat Smuggler, New York, 1938: 315-316.

4. Organized Crime in Ontario, op. cit.: 80-81.

conclusion derives mostly from the fact that the cast of organized crime in Montreal, like Toronto, until recently, contained a large proportion of individuals with Italian-sounding names.

A Commission of Inquiry into Gambling and Commercialized Vice in Montreal in May 1950 revealed that Montreal, like most big cities south of the border, had a large number of networks of organized criminals whose activities ranged from loan-sharking, prostitution, illegal gambling to drug trafficking, electoral fraud and 'corruption of officials'.[1] During the same month, however, the police discovered in the house of Frank Petrula, one of the prominent drug traffickers at the time, a list of policemen, journalists, and politicians who were being paid off by the crime syndicate during the municipal election which had just ended.[2] Petrula's notes indicated that his network and those of his fellow operators had spent more than one hundred thousand dollars in an attempt to defeat the Civic Action League and its reform-minded candidate Jean Drapeau. Although the Civic Action League won the election, its victory was only short-lived.[3] Before the League

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1. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.: 83; 'Chief Langlois Fired, Fined $500; Dufresne and Brodeur Fined $7000; 17 other police, Ex-Police Punished', The Montreal Star, October 8, 1954.

2. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit. These payments were actually insignificant when compared to what the Capone and other crime organizations paid in the U.S. in the two or three decades earlier for the protection of their gambling and liquor operations, see H. Asbury, Sucker's Progress: An Informal History of Gambling in America from the Colonies to Canfield, Montclair, N.J., 1969; idem, The Underworld of Chicago, London, 1941; J. Landesco, op. cit.; K. Allsop, op.cit.

3. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.: 85.

regrouped and regained power a few years later after the initial setback (it has governed Montreal todate), municipal politics in Montreal was said to be dominated by organized crime figures who virtually decided who should be elected, through their enormous 'campaign contributions' and manpower,[1] as was the case in most big cities in America[2] and Sicily.[3]

It is well beyond the scope of this study to catalogue all the various criminal networks that have flourished in Montreal; nevertheless in the history of organized crime in Canada the names and networks of the Cotroni brothers, Paolo Violi, and the Dubois brothers clearly rank in importance and notoriety as those of Al Capone, Lucky Luciano, Frank Costello, Gambino, Bonanno and others in the United States. These three networks in Montreal streamlined organized crime in Canada in the same way Capone and others did in America. Until his death in 1980 by natural causes, the name Vic Cotroni was synomymous locally with the Montreal 'Mafia', and it is generally believed that it was his organization, which included his three brothers and associates Frank Dastin and Lucien Rivard, that made Montreal one of the world's notorious underworld cities by establishing it as a key North American point of entry for heroin from Marseilles.[4] The police believe that Cotroni's

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1. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.

2. Ed Reid, op. cit; J. Landesco, op. cit; W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.

3. M. Pantaleone, The Mafia and Politics, London, 1962; G. Servadio, Mafia and Mafioso: A History of the Mafia from its origins to the present day, New York, 1976.

4. CBC Organized Crime 'Connections', Part I, June 12, 1977.

success in the field of organized crime was largely due to his close association with the Joe Bonanno's network of New York whose associate, Carmen Galente, worked in Montreal from 1953 to 1955 to assist the Cotroni gang to take over the criminal life of the city through the imposition of ruthless orders.[1] For Cotroni, according to the police, the arrival of Carmen Galente with the power of the New York Bonanno network behind him was a turning point in the dangerous feud with that city's Jewish gangs who were in alliance with the Magadino network of Buffalo. This situation set off the gangland slayings of the 1950s and 1960s for the control of narcotic trafficking and other criminal operations.[2] Galente, however, was expelled from Canada in 1955 after he was apparently believed to have achieved his objective in reorganizing the Cotroni network. The Cotroni 'family' is said to have established extensive gambling interests in Florida as well, and good ties with the Corsican underworld.[3] Even after his retirement from active engagement, Cotroni was reported to have remained influential in the criminal life of the country and often served as an adviser to his successor, Paolo Violi.[4]

Violi who inherited the leadership of the Cotroni organization ran an ice cream parlour in the Italian area, east of Montreal, which the police believe was actually a front for

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1. ibid.

2. ibid.

3. Florida, 'Organized Crime Controls Council', 1976 Annual Report, Tallahassee, Florida, 1977: 2-11.

4. CRC: 'Organized Crime, Connections', op. cit.

a variety of criminal activities which included loansharking, prostitution, drug trafficking, extortion by violence and murder.[1] The activities of the Violi gang were laid bare during the Quebec Organized Crime probe as a result of the electronic bugging device which the police planted behind the milk cooler in Violi's ice cream parlour which has been the meeting place of members of criminal gangs, not just from his Montreal organization but from across Canada, such as Joe Gentile, a leader of the Vancouver gang and a business partner of Violi, and John Papalia from Toronto. The device recorded incidents that resulted in a curious spectacle. For years, a number of ruthless killers and extortionists in his gang donned headsets to listen to themselves talking to Violi about various criminal exploits.[2] The device recorded, among others, a conversation regarding the dynamiting of the home of a woman who owed money to a man with the network ties.[3] Violi, however, preferred to go to jail rather than testify during the Quebec probe into organized crime on the grounds that his answers would tend to incriminate him. He listed himself as a businessman with interests in several Montreal pizza shops, but the Montreal Police Commission in 1974 named him the head of that city's underworld.[4] Before he was murdered by two

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1. ibid.

2. ibid.

3. ibid.

4. A. Bequai, Organized Crime, op. cit.: 17.

assailants in Montreal on January 22, 1978,[1] Violi and his gang were already facing problems from the growing powers of the French Canadian gangs.[2]

The Dubois clan of nine brothers has been the most formidable force in the Montreal underworld in recent years and, like other gangs in the Montreal underworld, they had previously worked for leaders of the Cotroni organization from which they broke away.[3] Although the police had been aware of their presence for at least twenty years previously, it was not until the Quebec Organized Crime Commission hearings of the 1970s that the public learned of the awesome power of the gang.[4] From a small beginning in petty theft in the poor district of St. Henri which was formerly believed to be controlled by Italian gangs, the Dubois have recently emerged supreme, probably as a result of leadership void created in the Italian gangs, and have put together, according to the latest estimate, an army of about two hundred gangsters trained in a variety of criminal activities: drug trafficking, loansharking, prostitution, protection rackets and contract killing, among others;[5] they have been able to implant themselves in force

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1. 'Montreal gangland figure slain', Washington Post, January 23, 1978: A4.

2. CBC: 'Connections', Part I, op. cit.

3. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.: 501.

4. 'Dubois terrors of ST. Henri', The Montreal Star, December 9, 1975: 1.

5. The Toronto Star, June 13, 1977: B5: 'The Dubois Brothers find Publicity Pays'.

downtown and in Old Montreal. As revealed by the Quebec crime probe, their bitter rivals have been the Pierre McSween gang and the Devil's Disciples, a motorcycle gang.[1]. The Dubois were able to wrestle control of a large part of the east-end drug trade from the Disciples after a dozen gangland murders in the 1970s when there was a marked increase in drug use among young people.[2] As a hooded man commented during the CBC documentary, 'it would appear that the Italian gangs are not only losing to the French Canadian gang, they are getting weaker'.[3]

Whereas the Sicilian mafioso and American and other Canadian syndicates strenuously avoid publicity the Dubois brothers actively seek it as a means of cultivating a false Robin Hood image and instilling terror and fear in the population, especially in their actual and potential rivals.[4]

In this latter respect they appear to resemble the mafia and the American syndicates. Their violence has enabled them to go virtually unchallenged in their control of many areas of Montreal criminal life.[5] Despite the terror which

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1. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.: 504.

2. ibid.

3. CBC Organized Crime documentary, 'Connections', Part 2, June 13, 1977.

4. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.; The Toronto Star, op. cit.

5. The Toronto Star, op. cit.

they perpetrate, the Quebec Crime Commission heard public testimony from several witnesses on the Dubois family activities. The bulk of the information on the ruthless brothers who stonewalled the crime inquiry for five days came from Pierre McSween, an ex-Dubois gang member, who volunteered eight hours of testimony to avenge the death of his younger brother Jacques whom he claimed was gunned down by the Dubois gang in a dispute over drug trafficking territory.[1] He related in detail how the Dubois acquired control of much of Montreal's drug, loansharking, prostitution and protection rackets; he told the inquiry that he was then in hiding 'because the Dubois have killed all my gang members'.[2] An aging nightclub owner, Charles Houle, told the organized crime inquiry that in the previous ten years he had paid the family $50,000 for 'protection' at the rate of $100.00 a week, and he dazed the inquiry commissioners with the revelation that his last $100.00 payment had been made only two days prior to his testimony.[3] But charges were never laid against the brothers because of lack of evidence. In their concluding report, the inquiry commisioners observed, 'While some experts believe the Mafia to be a greater threat, others maintain that the ruthless methods of the Dubois, the large number of thugs surrounding each brother, and the frightening cruelty of their strong-arm men make them the most influential criminal group on the island of Montreal'.[4] Admittedly the Dubois gang is extremely

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1. CBC: 'Connections', Part 2, op. cit.

2. CBC: 'Connections', Part 2, op. cit.; The Toronto Star, June 13, 1977: B5.

3. The Toronto Star, op. cit.; CBC: 'Connections', op. cit.

4. The Toronto Star, op. cit.

proficient in the destruction of businesses that would not cooperate with them.[1] Former employees of the Iroquois Hotel in Old Montreal, among others, detailed how the Dubois had gradually taken over the place, first by slipping in a few of their men as employees, and then by physically expelling all other staff members who would not cooperate with them in bringing drugs into the hotel.[2] One ex-employee testified that gang members had lured him into a room and then deliberately gouged out one of his eyes.[3]

Largely through McSween's detailed testimony the Quebec Crime Commission came to believe that the Dubois brothers were not only the central figures in the Montreal gangland war, but also its main beneficiaries. As a result of these bloody conflicts, the brothers have increased their prestige and renown in the Montreal underworld, where their tight grip remains clear and present despite the Commission's explosive revelations.[4] 'Possibly, never before has someone admitted on television to being involved in murders for which he has not been charged'.[5] In comparison to the Italian gangs in Montreal, the French Canadian gang exhibits more savagery and ruthlessness and their actions resemble those of Sicilian mafia and American syndicates in all respects.

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1. 'Bar Owner defied Protection racket in Dubois Territory', The Montreal Star, December 9, 1975.
2. J.P. Charbonneau, op. cit.: 502.
3. ibid.
4. ibid: 504.
5. CBC 'Connections', op. cit.

The Vancouver Networks

As in its sister cities of Toronto and Montreal, organized crime in Vancouver consists of a variety of racketeerings: loansharking, extortion, contract killing, fencing, labour racketeering, corruption, illegal gambling, prostitution and drug trafficking, among others.[1] Whereas prior to the mid 1960s these criminal activities were the exclusive preserve of the native whites in cooperation with their confederates in the United States, in recent years, however, the Chinese triad syndicates, often known locally as Tongs, have emerged as serious rivals in the operation and control of these activities, especially extortion, gambling and drug trafficking. Vancouver is said to have become not only the organizing headquarters of a massive illegal immigration network for both Canada and the United States but has also attained an international reputation as the narcotic capital of Canada, which serves as major entry point and distribution centre for southeast Asian heroin for British Columbia itself and for onward transmission to the rest of Canada and the United States.[2]

For reasons of history, climate, law enforcement, availability, easy transportation and distribution patterns, British Columbia, and in particular Vancouver, has the largest

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1. Organized Crime in British Columbia: Co-ordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU), Second Findings Report, November 1975, Department of Attorney-General of B.C.

2. F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981: 233.

population in Canada of heroin addicts whose activities, in support of their habits, often give rise to a variety of other crimes: burglary, mugging, break and enter, bank robbery, robbery, extortion and murder, among others.[1] With a population of about two million, it has been conservativly estimated that British Columbia has over twelve thousand heroin addicts, or more than two-thirds of the national figure, and the City of Vancouver alone is believed to have in excess of seven thousand addicts who require nearly a half million dollars each day to support their habits.[2] Malcolm Matheson, chairman of the Federal Provincial Drug Strategies, told the local Rotary Club in Victoria, Capital of British Columbia, that the heroin rate in the Province is more than five times the national average. He stated that the illicit trade ranks as the Province's fifth-largest industry, with an annual take of about $255 million, and that the risks are minimal and the profits enormous.[3]

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1. 'Why British Columbia, and in particular Vancouver, has a large heroin addict population', CLEU: Initial Report on Organized Crime in B.C., 2 October, 1974: 9-10.

2. ibid; Opium smoking was introduced in the Province of B.C. by Chinese settlers who took part in the railroad construction in the 1800s, and later some of them settled in the Province. The Opium Act in Canada of 1908 outlawed its import, manufacture, sale, or possession for sale, except for medical use. The Act, in effect, created the illicit market and, with the advent of the Opium and Drug Act in 1911, criminalized the user. Heroin appeared first in Canada in the early 1920s and after World War II, it quickly replaced opium as the drug of choice; CLEU, 1974: 9.

3. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 236.

It was not until the late 1960s that organized criminals started to emerge from Vancouver's Chinatown, the largest in Canada, whose inhabitants were formerly known for their law-abiding behaviour. Chinese groups are reported to be engaged in the importation and trafficking of heroin, in the fencing of stolen property, in prostitution, loansharking, bookmaking, and gambling; all of which activities are often carried out behind the facade of legitimate business.[1] Their cultural ties with southeast Asia and Hong Kong in particular often place them in an advantageous position over their competitors in the procuring and marketing of heroin. It has been established that more than ninety per cent of heroin ending up on the streets of Canadian cities, especially Vancouver, originates in the Golden Triangle region - northeastern Burma, northern Thailand, and northern Laos.[2] These remote areas are said to be controlled by tribesmen and members of the triad societies based in Hong Kong - the so-called Hong Kong Connection. Outside Asia, the key cities serving as smuggling centres for the Triad organization are Vancouver and Amsterdam,

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1. Prior to 1967, Canadian immigration policy was basically racist in orientation and the Chinese were among the ethnic groups not welcomed in Canada. In 1885 a head tax of $50.00 was introduced, raised, then raised again to $500 for every Chinese coming into Canada by 1903. As the Chinese found ways of paying the tax, the government in 1923 passed the Immigration Act which cut off Chinese immigration altogether. The liberalized Immigration Act in 1967 is said to have enabled criminal elements from Hong Kong, holding British passports, to enter the country, and their activities have tended to pollute the once law-abiding Chinatown. Their crime networks now rival those of other ethnic groups; Bresler, op. cit.: 229-231; CBC: 'Connections', Part 2, op. cit.

2. A.W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin In Southeast Asia, New York, 1972: 9, 64-65; The New York Times, September 17, 1968: 45; idem, June 6, 1971: 2; Bresler, op. cit.: 235.

the latter being called the heroin capital of Europe,[1] just as the former is of Canada. Both cities have huge Chinatowns. Large quantities of heroin reaching Hong Kong from the Golden Triangle are smuggled into these cities for onward distribution to Europe and North America. In addition to narcotics, Vancouver in recent years has earned another dubious distinction: the prostitution capital of Canada. The recent 'clean street law' passed by the Parliament of Canada in December 1985 was due largely to the pressures from the councils and mayors of such cities as Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Halifax where street solicitations appear to have reached a 'crisis stage'.[2] Street solicitation became a major problem in Canada in 1978, after a supreme Court of Canada ruling that prostitutes could not be convicted, as a lower court had done, of soliciting unless they were 'pressing and persistent' in their advances.[3] As a result, prostitutes began lining the streets of many cities, and were able to discuss prices openly with customers on the street, and police were unable to interfere with their activities. The new tough law gives police broad powers and empowers them to arrest and charge prostitutes and their clients 'whenever they communicate with one another in public for the sale or purchase of sex'.[4] According to the new law, police no longer have to prove that the prostitutes were 'pressing and persistent'. Observers,

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1. CBC: 'Connections', Part 2, op.cit.: F. Robertson, Triangle of Death: The Inside Story of the Triads - The Chinese Mafia, London, 1977: F. Bresler, op. cit.

2. "Prostitution at a 'crisis stage' in Toronto, Mayor Art Eggleton says", The Toronto Star, December 19, 1983: A1, A2.

3. ibid.

4. Dale Brazao, 'Police give Prostitutes 30 days grace on new law', The Sunday Star, December 22, 1985: A1, A4.

however, believe that the new legislation is wrong-headed and that it does not address the real problem, which is high unemployment in the country, especially among teenage girls who are driven into prostitution.[1] Most of these girls have consistently maintained that they are in prostitution because they could not find any other jobs.[2] Others say that they are in prostitution because it is the easiest way to make money which they cannot otherwise make in the conventional jobs. Their services are usually in high demand by a large minority of the population. This lack of employment and the consequent recourse to prostitution by women is a common phenomenon, we would argue, in most capitalist societies, and they are conditions that one does not normally find in socialist societies.

The strength of organized crime in any country can be measured not only by the number of its networks and gangs but also by the nature of its links and connections with the 'respectable' members of the society and its institutions. Where these connections are pervasive, as in the United States and Sicily, organized crime tends to be widespread. Where, however, these connections are relatively few, as in Canada, organized crime naturally tends to be limited in scope and easily contained. Knowingly or unknowingly, they help to facilitate the activities of organized crime. In Canada, three clear, distinct connections have been noted to be analogous to those in the U.S.

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1. ibid.

2. Sarah Jane Growe, 'Prostitutes fighting to ply the trade legally', The Toronto Star, March 3, 1984: F1, F4.

Financial Connection

While it may be easy to identify the crime whether it is illegal gambling, extortion or drug trafficking, it is always hard to pinpoint what happens to the vast profits made from these crimes. And ever since Al Capone was jailed in 1931 on the only charge in which he could be caught, income tax evasion,[1] criminals have been faced with the problem of reporting how they made their money, which means making dirty money clean or laundering it. One of the methods of overcoming this problem has been through complicated property deals, possibly in foreign countries, where the true ownership and financing of hotels and apartments is virtually impossible to trace.[2] Another method involves moving money across borders by means of secret bank accounts in foreign countries, such as Switzerland, from where the money is sent back to the mob, its origin disguised.[3] Recent revelations in Toronto and Vancouver indicate that the five Hong Kong ex-sergeants-majors,

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1. Elmer L. Irey with W.J. Slocum, The Tax Dodgers: The Inside Story of the T-men's War with America's Political Underworld Hoodlums, London & New York, 1949.

2. It has been argued that Meyer Lansky, Charles Luciano's lieutenant, was the originator of money laundering techniques which he perfected to husband the profits form his world-wide drug deals in Cuba, the Caribbean, Marseille and Amsterdam, and to finance his nightclubs in Havana, Miami and other places; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 18-28; F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance, London' 1976: 150-151.

3. CBC: 'Connections', Part 2, op. cit.

who were heavily involved in narcotics deals in Hong Kong and who recently emigrated to Canada, have huge investments in a number of Canadian construction companies, among them the Barony Estates Inc., and Roy East, a hugely profitable subsidiary of a company in Amsterdam that is itself owned by the Royal Bank of Canada which apparently handled some of the transfer of funds of the Five Dragons, as the five ex-Hong Kong police officers are known.[1]

In addition to owning a factory in Thailand, Nam Kong, one of the five, is also said to have an involvement in the Florence Nightingale Hospital just outside Vancouver.[2] In 1974 it was estimated that 66 percent of all purchases of downtown Vancouver highrise buildings were made with money from ex-Hong Kong police racketeers.[3] It has also been noted that the 1971 corporate papers of the Barony Estate indicated that Lui Lok, the most notorious of the Five Dragons, was among the directors of the company.[4] Many less powerful but equally corrupt former Hong Kong policemen also moved to exclusive areas of Vancouver in the 1970s but some are said to have fled to Taiwan, fearing that they might be extradited back to Hong Kong if the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption then probing into shady financial deals by officials were to

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1. 'Royal Bank Linked with Crooked Cops from Hong Kong', The Toronto Star, June 16, 1977: A3.
2. CBC 'Connections', op. cit.
3. ibid.
4. The Toronto Star, op. cit.

reveal their activities in Hong Kong.[1] Their presence in Canada has raised several questions, including the manner in which they gained entry to the country and their dealings with the Canadian chartered banks which apparently displayed no curiosity when the ex-policemen made their huge deposits.[2] Recently the United States Congress has passed a legislation making it mandatory on the part of financial institutions to report to the authorities any unusual deposits and movements of huge sums of money by individuals suspected of organized crime activities. No such mandatory reporting exists in Canada yet.

Political Connection

In the United States and Sicily, politics and crime have long been known as familiar bedfellows both at local and national levels.[3] One of the areas in Canadian life where

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1. ibid, Apparently the 'Five Dragons' were aware of the CBC investigation into their activities as well as the Crime Commission hearings in Hong Kong at the time in 1977; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 234; CBC: 'Connections', Part 2, op. cit.

2. 'Dragons' qualified for landed immigrant status, Cullen Tells MPs'. When the question was raised in Parliament of how the 'Five Dragons' gained entry into Canada, the then Immigration Minister, Bud Cullen, told the House that the five men met the immigration requirements; The Toronto Star, June 16, 1977: A3.

3. Usually in the U.S. political influence of the cabal is more directly obtained through generous contributions to political candidates of its choice, often made possible by huge, tax-free profits from criminal operations. Often the cabal assists both candidates in an election, thus assuring itself of influence regardless who wins; see W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff (eds.), Whose Law What Order? A Conflict Approach to Criminology, New York, 1976: 167, M. McIntosh, op. cit.: 56-58. The mafia in Sicily, on the other hand, is noted for its uncanny ability to procure votes for its 'candidates; B. King and T. Okey, Italy Today, London, 1909: 121; G. Servadio: Mafioso: A History of the Mafia from its Origins to the Present Day, New York, 1976; H. Hess, Mafia and Mafioso: The Structure of Power, Farnborough, 1973.

the proximity and influence of the United States do not seem to have made any significant impact appears to be that of politics, especially at the national level. This situation could be the result of the different political systems, cultural ethos, and the manner in which the law is held in the two countries.[1] Unlike in the United States and Sicily where criminals and politicians have traditionally supported each other for mutual benefits,[2] politicians in Canada, especially at the federal level, have been relatively free of the 'entente cordiale'. However, two cases involving politicians and organized criminals have come to the attention of the Canadian public in the last fifteen years: the first involving a deputy premier of a province, and the second a federal member of parliament.

In October 1970 the Quebec deputy premier and minister of Labour was kidnapped and later murdered by the 'Front de Liberation du Quebec' (FLQ) terrorists. One of the chilling discoveries made after his death was his several meetings with members of the Cotroni network of Montreal. His executive

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1. The manner in which the law is held in any country is often an indication of the degree of respect or lack of it accorded to it. While Americans have traditionally relied on the use of the law to deal with social problems they often show little regard for it. This contrasts with the way the law is used in Canada and the degree of respect it commands; see D.R. Taft and R. W. England, Jr., Criminology, 4th ed., New York, 1964: 23; G. Tyler, 'The Roots of Organized Crime', Crime and Delinquency, 8, 1962: 325-338, J.T. Adams,'Our Lawless Heritage', Atlantic Monthly, December 1928.

2. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, op. cit. 128; Estes Kefauver, Crime in America, Garden City, New York, 1951; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 150-168; F. Pearce, op. cit.: 131-152.

assistant, Rene Gagnon, who was present during the meetings, confirmed that the minister had been meeting with Nicol Diori, Cotroni's lieutenant, and Frank Dastin, a network member who owned gambling and nightclub enterprises in Montreal. Gagnon also confirmed that the network members had "asked that they should be able to continue their operations in exchange for 'information'".[1] The second case involved the efforts of one of the Vancouver networks to pry information from a Vancouver member of Parliament who was a close friend of the Conservative Party leadership candidate, regarding the route of a proposed gas pipeline. The land would then be bought at a low price and resold to the gas pipeline firms at a huge profit. While confirming that the meetings took place, the M.P. insisted he was not aware that the other person was a member of organized crime. But the network member claimed that he made his identity clear to the M.P. from the outset. The M.P. who threatened to sue the CBC for exposing the meeting later backed down in his threat.[2]

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1. CBC: 'Connections', Part 1, June 12, 1977; The Toronto Star, June 13, 1977: 'CBC scores direct hit on mob'.

2. 'John Reynolds suing CBC for Crime Story', The Toronto Star, June 16, 1977: A3; CBC: 'Connections', Part 2, June 13, 1977.

Infiltrating the Unions

All independent labour unions are naturally prime targets for organized crime wherever it can manage to establish a foothold and 'mutual understanding' with the union hierarchy. Often they represent the opportunity of providing jobs for newly arrived organized crime recruits, of getting kickbacks from employers in under-the-table deals, and of getting work done cheaply for 'respectable' employers and for organized crime companies. But above all, control of unions demonstrates to businessmen and criminals alike the most potent manifestations of raw power.[1] As a result of the integration of most key Canadian industries with their parent companies in the U.S. and the consequent amalgamation of the unions in these industries, organized crime has made more inroads in the labour-management field in Canada than it has in any other areas of Canadian life.[2] Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in Ontario and Quebec, the provinces with the largest proportion of their work force unionized. Labour racketeering in Canada is such an involved topic that it cannot be treated fully within the scope of this study; however, two or three cases in Canada may be cited to illustrate the situation that is more pervasive in the U.S.

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1. The autonomy which the labour unions enjoy in capitalist countries, as contrasted with their counterparts in socialist countries where they are closely monitored by the government, often creates room for beneficial relationships between racketeers and crooked union leaders in which the union members are exploited in a variety of ways; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.; A. Block and W.J. Chambliss,Organizing Crime, o.cit: 65-82; M. McIntosh, op. cit.: 51-52.

2. Such unions as United Auto Workers (UAW), Teamster's Union, Allied Workers of Pulp and Paper have branches both in the United States and Canada.

One of the major areas of involvement of organized crime network is often the construction unions, for the greater part of the work force here is both unskilled and little educated. Thus, in Toronto it has been noted that the Cicero Romanelli company which owns several construction firms in the Toronto area has long been dominated by the Jack Luppino gang of Toronto which specializes in construction racketeering.[1] Recently the company expanded its operation to Ottawa. In an effort to gain control of the Ottawa operaton, the network approached one Shongay Denis, the business agent of the Plasterers and Cement Masons Union who was responsible for dealing with the company on behalf of his union. According to Denis, he was asked to set up a different union separate from the one he was then working for. His refusal to cooperate resulted in a series of harassment and intimidation directed at him and his family, he told the CBC documentary.[2] The new union, if formed, would probably exist only on paper.

In a world of large transportation firms, Maislin Transport is certainly a name to be reckoned with. With headquarters in Montreal, they are one of Canada's largest carriers, with much of their business being carried on with customers in the U.S., particularly in places like New York and Chicago. It was revealed in the late 1970s that the firm had had a long connection with the Cotroni network of Montreal in matters of personnel. It was also noted that one of the men

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1. CBC: 'Connections', Part 1, June 12, 1977.
2. ibid.

who initiated the connection was the president of the company itself, Sidney Maislin. A member of the network interviewed by the CBC suggested that the purpose of the connection was to maintain labour peace and to enable the company to get business by hiring organized criminals of Italian descent.[1]

In a more recent case, Consumers Distributing, a North American retail chain headquartered in Toronto, pleaded guilty to paying $255,000 in illegal kickbacks to Sean Floyd of Teamster Local 419 'with a view to ensuring a beneficial relationship for the Company with the Teamsters' Union which represents the company's lorry drivers and warehouse workers'.[2] While Floyd received a prison sentence the company was fined $125,000. The court noted that the payments were made at various locations suggested by Floyd such as doughnut shops, restaurant and hotel parking lots, and to his two married sisters purportedly for construction repairs and 'security consulting', although the services were never provided. The Court noted that payments were concealed by 'false deceptive entries in the company's books'. In passing sentence, Judge John Kerr observed: 'Even though Jimmy Hoffa is gone, problems with the Teamsters still linger on'.[3]

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1. ibid.
2. The Toronto Star, June 20, 1985: A1.
3. ibid.

Conclusion

Organized crime in Canada, like its counterpart in the U.S., offers an easy means of achieving wealth and power, and its operation cuts across ethnic lines. In particular, it offers the minority and deprived groups and fringe elements in the society an easy means of advancing their social and economic status which otherwise would not be possible by conventional means. The phenomenon has existed in the country probably for more than fifty years but it was only in the 1960s and 1970s that public concern about it began to be heard. Admittedly organized crime in Canada does draw a lot of strength from, and may be heavily influenced by, the activites of its counterpart in the U.S., but it would be misleading to view the operators as employees of American syndicates. Their association is probably as a result of cooperation among men in the same business or men with common interests.

There are, however, differences and similarities in the manner in which organized crime is carried out in the two countries mainly due to differences in political morality, cultural ethos and geographical size. Organized crime in Canada, as in the U.S., could be viewed as an extension of the Canadian private profit economy operating in the illicit sector. It will continue to attract some groups who feel that they are at strategic disadvantge or left out in the competition which often favours the stronger, and it will probably continue to thrive so long as its goods and services are in demand by the 'respectable' members of the society. Some of the conditions which favour the growth of organized

crime in the U.S. are also present in Canada. Organized crime in Canada is admittedly an indigenous growth in the soil of an urban industrial economy moving into affluence, but retaining extensive pockets of poverty. While there are some close associations and cooperation between the operators on both sides of the border, it would be misleading to jump into the conclusion that the operation in Canada is a branch of the American phenomenon. As we pointed out in the preceding chapter, organized crime consists of a coalition of people and networks; who dominates the coalition or which network dominates the other varies from place to place and from time to time. Being a loose association, there is usually no one man in the network whose word is law.[1] The view of a branch plant operation obviously harkens to the theory of a nation-wide organization or international organization which has never been proven. It is inconsistent with the way organized crime is known to operate.[2] People in the same business usually have need for close association with one another and organized criminals are no exception. As in the case of the U.S. and Sicily, it is the operation of the Canadian private profit economy that tends to bring the racketeers and 'respectable' members of the power structure into mutual, reciprocal relationships in which each side is able to pursue the goal of profit and the power it brings, which is the essence of capitalism.

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1. Estes Kefauver, Crime in America, op.cit.: 13; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.

2. W.J. Chambliss, op.cit.: 9, 73.

Although we have argued that one area in Canada where the proximity of the U.S. and its organized crime do not appear to have made any significant impact is that of politics at the national level, it is easy to attribute this difference in political morality to the wrong causes. Most observers of Canadian scene know the extent of the impact of its Socialist Party on Canadian politics and economy. Since its formation in 1932 as the Cooperative Commonwelth Federation, later renamed . . the New Democratic Party in 1961, this party's avowed objective has been the establishment of 'a social order that is based on the common good, not private profit'.[1] Even though it has so far not been able to form the government on the national level, it has persistently kept successive Canadian governments from moving dangerously to the right.

It is an acknowledged fact in Canada that all the social safety nets which make Canada different from the U.S. - universal medicare, universal old age pension, baby bonus, unemployment insurance, hundreds of government corporations, etc - were originated by this party, though implemented by the successive Liberal government which adopted the proposed programs upon being elected. The alliance between the labour unions and the New Democratic Party has not only kept labour racketeering to a minimum but has also kept politics and organized crime from becoming strange bedfellows to the extent they are known to be in the United States. Before its birth, the operation of the Canadian government was in no way different from that of the United States in terms of social policies that are based on the common good, not private profit.

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1. Paul Martin, A Very Public Life, Ottawa, Ontario, 1983.

CHAPTER 5: THE TRIAD PHENOMENON IN HONG KONG

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Introduction

This chapter explores the activities of the Triad Societies in Hong Kong. In recent years the activities of the Triad societies have been noted in many parts of the world and in particular in Southeast Asia with regards to the narcotics trade and other forms of organized crime. The chapter, however, first explores the old China background with its myriads of secret societies of which the Triad was one. Next, the chapter traces the origin of the Society, the reason for its formation, its role as an unofficial opposition to the Chinese Imperial government, its evolution from political to underworld activities, its place in China after the establihment of the Republic, its role during the Japanese invasion of the country, and the reasons why the Society members were compelled to leave mainland China for Hong Kong after the Socialist Revolution.

The chapter then explores the activities of the society in Hong Kong, their symbiotic relationship with the police and the activities of some corrupt police officials who borrow a leaf from the book of the Society to set up their own criminal networks, and others who collaborated with the Triad syndicates in the pursuit of wealth. The internal organization and structure of the Society are examined and its initiation rite is as well noted. It argues that their persistent existence in Hong Kong is due largely to the operation of the capitalist economy in whose illegal sector they operate; to the protective shield afforded them by the Hong Kong police in return for a share of the graft, and that this 'alliance' stems from shared interest - the pursuit of profit, wealth and power.

THE TRIAD PHENOMENON:

The Old China Background

The evolution of the Triad Societies in Hong Kong, and its consequent proliferation in other countries of Asia, Europe, and North America, is bound up with the historical evolution in China of secret societies which had flourished there more than in any other country in the world. In order to understand the Triad evolution it is necessary to take a brief look at the Chinese secret societies of the past centuries of which the Triads are a component, and which had prior to 1912 played an important role in Chinese affairs. It should be noted at the outset that societies may be 'secret' in two different ways: they may be clandestine organizations working underground with the identities of their leaders and members carefully concealed; or they may be 'open' societies whose officials are known or knowable, but which have a secret ritual (usually of initiation) and an oath of secrecy binding the members not to reveal the affairs of the society to non-members or, above all, to the authorities.[1] It is possible, however, for a society to be 'secret' in both these ways, and the Chinese secret societies which were numbered in hundreds by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fell into either of these

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1. Wilfred Blythe, The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya, London, 1969: 3.

categories.[1]

A propensity to form groups for mutual support and the attainment of common objectives has long been a characteristic of the Chinese social pattern.[2] China's ritualistic societies existed for centuries born of needs based on a combination of self-protection and spiritual satisfaction, as well as ethical, political and social needs. However, once established, such societies frequently tend to deteriorate through the easy profits of power into tyrannical groups of bullies and extortionist gangs battening, as in the case of the Sicilian Mafia and the Triad Societies, upon the weakness of the public, providing a shelter under which entrepreneurs and traders at every level who were prepared to pay and obey could operate in comparative safety, and yet retaining an aura of chivalry as the poor man's protector and champion.[3] The secret sects and societies were, in fact, as much a part of the constitutional machinery of China as are the political party and the ballot box in the West. They were often the ultimate instruments for the relief of oppression, the only effective opposition to the Chinese authoritarian emperors, and they opened the way for changing a government with which

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1. Regarding the Elder Brothers Society, for example, Barnett notes, 'There is nothing secret about it in Hsiehmahsiang, however. Everybody who is anybody belongs to it and it operates quite openly...'; A. Doak Barnett, China on the Eve of Communist Takeover, London, 1963: 127.

2. W. Blythe, op. cit.: 14.

3. ibid: 1.

the people were dissatisfied.[1] The Chinese secret societies whose members consisted largely of poor peasants and destitute elements were closely linked, unlike the mafia, to the peasantry without themselves being engaged in agriculture; however, they were freer in their movements than peasants tied to the land, and they usually served as liaison agents and transmitters of rumours.[2]

Their activities in China included the stirring up of anti-foreign feelings, the extortion of money from hawkers, shopkeepers, hotel-keepers, prostitutes, labourers, transport undertakings, opium and gambling dens; 'protection' rackets; kidnapping for ransom; the operation of criminal rings and of course the organization of opposition to the Imperial government.[3] There is, however, a good reason to believe that many of them were originally founded as benevolent associations for laudable and unobjectionable purposes, something akin to the Mafia and Freemasonary in the West. Throughout the centuries there were repeated outbreaks of revolts against the ruling emperors sponsored by the secret societies whose main role was that of fifth columnists.[4]

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1. ibid: 18.

2. Jean Chesneaux (ed.), Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China 1840-1950, Stanford, California, 1972: 8.

3. Jean Chesneaux, Secret Societies in China in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1971: vi.

4. The political activities of secret societies have been a basic factor in the establishment of dynasties and in the political fortunes of the republic. They were the principal instrument in Imperial China for the expression of political grievances; ibid.

With the establishment of the Republic in 1912 secret societies were no longer considered unlawful and they came out into the open as power groups, still maintaining the secret rituals of sworn blood brotherhood, and claiming freedom from legal restraint. Before long, however, every official and military leader who hoped to advance in his career found it essential to belong to the local society.[1] Time and time again they were to be found among the national resistance forces and they drew their strength from the sociological and ideological bases of the old society: economic stagnation, the local and narrow character of social relations, the weight of tradition and the respect for authority (even that of an outlaw), routine, and superstition.[2]

From the end of the nineteenth century onwards when a capitalist economy was developed by large-scale foreign financial interests[3] and a modern sector made its appearance in the Chinese national economy - banking, wholesale trade, and light industry - the quadripartite

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1. K.S. Latourette, The Chinese: Their History and Culture, New York, 1964: 681.

2. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 10-11.

3. Foreign investments in China more than doubled between 1928 and 1930, from Y100 million to Y202 million annually, and remittances from overseas Chinese increased from Y215.6 million to Y316.3 million, Yang Sueh-Chang, 'China's Depression and Subsequent Recovery, 1931-36: An Inquiry into the Applicability of the Modern Income Determination Theory: Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1950: 118, cited in Lloyd E. Eastman, The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937, Cambridge, Mass., 1974: 353.

traditional hierarchy of scholars, peasants, artisans, and tradesmen which still characterized Chinese society in 1840 was completely broken up.[1] It was thought at first that with this transformation of the economy and the consequent changes in Chinese life in modern times sooner or later the secret societies would disappear. But this apparently did not happen; rather these changes considerably widened the social basis of these archaic groups, particularly among the urban masses. Thus the wretched peasants who flooded into Shanghai and the other big cities completely without means of support naturally clung to the secret societies.[2] Even up to the beginning of the present century, far from withering away in the cities, the societies were known to have maintained a great deal of influence in the country. Many of the powerful figures in the Communist Government of China in the 1950s-1970s were thought to have graduated from the school of the secret societies[3] (especially the 'Elder Brothers')

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1. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.

2. ibid.

3. The Chinese Novel, Shui Hu Chuan (The Story of the River Bank) relates how large numbers of outlaws resisted conscription for public works during the Sui dynasty (A.D. 618). This story which achieved widespread popularity throughout China by the year 1660 relates how a group of 108 men, gathered together and swore oaths of mutual fidelity, secrecy and obedience, taking Heaven, Earth, Stars, and the Moon as Father, Mother, Brothers, and Sisters respectively, and drinking a mixture of blood and wine. The book naturally was banned during the Imperial regime but in the early 1930s the Communist Party reprinted it and saw it 'as suitable to this day as the the day it was written'. Chairman Mao admitted that this story was one of the powerful influences that shaped his early thoughts. The Story has two translations in English: All Men are Brothers, by Pearl Buck, London, (1933), and Water Margin, by J.H. Jackson, Shanghai, 1937; J. Chesneaux; see also W. Blythe, op. cit.: 21; E. Snow, Red Star over China, New York, 1977: 129-132, 138.

where they learned the technique of harnessing the traditional rebellious urge of the masses to the chariot of political ambition.[1]

Lyman has noted with respect to the Chinese secret societies what Bell has noted with respect to organized crime in America as a tool for achieving social mobility. He observed in his Chinese Americans that secret societies have attracted adventurers to their ranks, that those who felt that the legitimate avenues to wealth or power were blocked against them or too slow to suit their ambitions found that extortion and the control of vice offered advantages. He notes that much of the gambling, robbery and prostitution enterprises in China and in overseas Chinese communities were under either the direct ownership or the tributary control of secret societies. He maintains that a career was possible in a secret society - either a brief, exciting life of adventure and thrills or, if fortune smiled, the chance to overthrow the empire itself and participate in the establishment of a new dynasty.[2]

A full list of Chinese secret societies is rather bewildering and is outside the scope of this study. The names used by Chinese secret societies are confusing to the extreme, perhaps purposely so in order to confound the

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1. Agnes Smedley, Battle Hymn of China, New York, 1943: 113; Edgar Snow, op. cit.: 65-68, 129-138; 212-214.

2. S.M. Lyman, Chinese Americans, cited in F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981.

authorities. A list of their more important and exotic names in Chinese history would have to include the White Lotus, the Red Eyebrow, the Yellow and Red Turbans, the Elder Brothers, the Heaven and Earth, the Three Dots, the Triad, the Eight Trigrams, the Small and Big Swords, the Righteous Harmony, the Red Beards, the Black Flags, the Mutual Progress, the Boxers, the Green and Red Gangs, the White Dragon, the White Gang, Achieve Justice, and the Two Dragons and a Tiger,etc.[1,2] Chinese Secret societies were not only a formidable force and opposition against China's ancien regime and the West, they were also said to have played a positive role in the country's War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945).[3]

It should be noted that of the four useful functions - spiritual, political, economic and social - which the secret societies performed in China, perhaps it was in their military and insurrectionist performance that they were best noted. Secret society members thought themselves immunce against bullets,[4] and some secret societies were intimately involved with local peasant 'self-defence' movements in central China and the interior.[5] Both sides in the civil war between the Kuomintang, the Party of the bourgeoisie (KMT), and the

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1. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies in China, op. cit.: vii.

2. The secret societies actually constituted two main systems: The White Lotus in the north and central China, and the Triad in the south. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.; W. Blythe, op. cit.: 20.

3. Frank Robertson, Triangle of Death: The Inside Story of the Triads - The Chinese Mafia, London, 1977: 176. For the full text of Mao Tse-Tung's appeal to the Elder Brothers' society to close rank against the Japanese invading forces; see J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 182-184.

4. North China Herald, April 26, 1924.

5. Lucien Bianco, 'Secret Societies and Peasant Self-Defence, 1921-1933', in J. Chesneaux (ed.), Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China, op. cit.: 213-224.

Communists actively sought the help of the secret societies by appealing to their sense of patriotism which had been manifested in the past wars.[1]

Although they were an opposition force within the established order, they were not detached from the Chinese ancien regime: they were an integral part of it, stamped with the same defects and prisoners of the same limitations rather than a fundamental alternative to the regime.[2] Other secret societies, notably the Green Gang, turned to crime in the style of the Sicilian mafia and the American syndicates. This kind of activity, which had always been a component of secret society behaviour, was especially prevalent in great port cities like Shanghai and Hong Kong, whose vast floating population constituted an inexhaustible source of recruits and whose concentration of wealth made them particulary attractive to organized crime.[3] Their leaders were known to have engaged in innumerable forms of vice and crime: smuggling (particularly opium), gambling, extortion, prostitution and 'protection' rackets. From 1927 onwards Tu Yueh-sheng, the head of the Ch'ing Pang (Green Gang) society, was reputed to be the overlord of Shanghai in politics, business, and the underworld.[4]

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1. J. Chesneaux, Popular Movements, op. cit.: 13-14; W. Blythe, op. cit.: 12.

2. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 189-190.

3. J. Chesneaux, Popular Movements, op. cit.: 12.

4. Tu Yueh-sheng, Hwang Ching-yung, and Chang-Siao-Ling were frequently referred to in the Chinese press as the 'Big Three'. They dealt in a variety of organized crime - opium trafficking, kidnapping, blackmailing, gambling, prostitution, 'protection' rackets and plain murder in Shanghai. They were the supreme rulers of the French Concession, and the French authorities derived tremendous wealth from the activities of the gangs and in return the administration was turned over to them; J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 164-165.

For over thirty years, Tu Yueh-sheng's cartel was reported to have managed Shanghai's narcotics traffick with admirable efficiency; it not only imposed order on the city's rival gangs, but also demonstrated a keen awareness of international and domestic potentials.[1] In the early 1920s, the Shanghai syndicate began promoting the sale of millions of red-coloured heroin pills advertised as 'antiopium pills' and 'the best medicine in the world'. As thousands of Chinese opium smokers switched to that Western wonder drug, heroin, the cartel had to import by 1923 an estimated ten million tons of heroin annually from Europe and Japan to keep up with consumer demand. The promotion quickly turned thousands of residents of Shanghai and China into heroin addicts.[2]

It is precisely these aspects of the secret societies - their ancient characters and criminal activities - that would bring them and their leaders into conflict with the new regime in China at the end of the civil war which saw the collapse of the Chiang Kai-shek regime and the coming of the People's Republic of China. In the process an exodus would be triggered of the secret societies and their leaders into Hong Kong and other Asian countries, Europe, and North America.[3]

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1. A.W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, New York, 1972: 225.

2. ibid.

3. These later emigrants in the 1950s would be joining the earlier Chinese emigrants who had fled to the west coast of America (California and British Columbia) in the 1850s when the Imperial troops were 'cleaning up' after the Taiping and Triad rebellions: see W. Blythe, op. cit.: 26.

THE TRIAD SOCIETIES

Origin

It is generally believed that the Triad Society was founded, according to its own claim, in 1674 - twenty six years after the establishment of the Manchu dynasty of Ch'ing - by a group of five Buddhist monks in southern China.[1] Like the Sicilian Mafia which was established to check the oppression and excesses of foreign rulers, the avowed aim of the Triad Society was to overthrow the Manchus, an authoritarian, repressive foreign regime from Mongolia that had usurped china's Dragon Throne, and to restore the Imperial House of Chu (Ming dynasty) whose founder and first emperor came from the Chinese peasant class and which enjoyed tremendous popularity among the Chinese people.[2] The sacred emblem of the Society was a triangle, the three sides of which represented the three basic powers of Heaven, Earth, and Man. The word 'Triad' is actually the English designation of that emblem. The society is also known by many other names[3] such as the Heaven and Earth Society, the Three Dots society, Hung Wu, the reign title of Chu whom the Triad Society regarded as its first Ancestor and thus adopted

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1. W.P. Morgan, Triad Societies in Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1982: 3; W. Blythe, op. cit: 21.

2. J. Chesneaux, Popular Movements, op. cit.: 62.

3.Other names of the Society include: San Ho Hui - Society of the Three Elements in One; Hung Pang-Hung Party or Red Party, J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op.cit.: 15.

the character 'Hung' as the family name of its members.[1]

Prior to the advent of the Triad Society, it is generally accepted that the most notorious of China's rebellious society was the White Lotus Society, a wholly Buddhist organization formed in the tenth century (1129 A.D.) in northern China.[2] From the outset, it should be noted, the Triad Society was regarded by the Chinese Imperial authorities as a seditious brotherhood, and its tentacles, like the mafia's, spread throughout the southern provinces of Kwangtung, Kwangsi and Fukien where innumerable local societies sprang up. Its disturbing influence was reflected in the Imperial promulgation of special laws proscribing such brotherhoods, and, in 1792, mentioning the Heaven and Earth Society by name.[3] This was six years after a serious revolt

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1. Blythe, op. cit.:20.

2. Chinese history is replete with seditious sects whose persistence and pervasiveness often boggles the imagination. Throughout the centuries there were repeated outbreaks of revolts sponsored by sects claiming the name and ritual of the White Lotus. There had been a concerted drive by the Manchu dynasty of Ch'ing (1644-1911) to close down monasteries and crush the Buddhist movement which was viewed as political. Numerous Imperial edicts proscribing heterodox sects mentioned the White Lotus by name, but the society survived to reappear among the groups which coalesced to form the Boxer movement leading to the uprising of 1900; J.M. De Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persectution in China, London, 1903-1904: 153; J.S. Ward and W.G. Stirling, The Hung Society or The Society of Heaven and Earth, London, 1925: 1, 3; W. Blythe, op. cit.

4. W. Blythe, op. cit.: 22. The Triad's ability to penetrate almost every segment of the southern provinces of China was basically reminiscent of the Mafia's penetration of Sicilian society at every level; M. Pantaleone, The Mafia and Politics, London, 1966.

organized by a local Triad society had taken place in Formosa in which a magistrate was killed. Thereafter, the activities of the Brotherhood came increasingly to official attention,[1] and from 1817 onwards uprisings fostered by Triad societies became endemic throughout the three southern provinces despite the public beheading of thousands of their members. With the outlawing of the Society by the Manchus, it became basically clandestine in operation.[2] Thus the change from active rebellion and freedom of movement to comparatively secret resistance created an additional need for shared traditions, aims, and even rituals, including the adoption of identifying signs and passwords, as is believed to be the case with the Sicilian mafia and American syndicates, to help ensure safety and some unity of purpose and action.[3] For the same reason, initiation and promotion ceremonies also became elaborate affairs in which the aspirants are made to swear a succession of 36 oaths of allegiance and integrity (a kind of Ten Commandments), one of the the more famous being the thirteenth oath which reads:

> If I should change my mind and deny my membership of the Hung family, I will be killed by myriads of swords.[4]

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1. According to Favre, the Triad Society was 'officially noticed' in connection with seditious movements in 1749, 1789, 1814, 11817, and 1832, B. Favre, Les societes secretes en Chine, Paris, 1933.

2. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 16.

3. ibid.

4. ibid: 158.

Initially, the Triad Society, like the Sicilian mafia, was essentially a political organization directed against the Ch'ing dynasty[1] and its evolution into a wholly criminal organization is said to have come after the overthrow of that dynasty in 1911. In a way, there is a similarity between the evolution of the Triad Society and the Mafia. While the former was supposedly founded with the avowed objective of overthrowing a 'foreign' dynasty, the latter was said to be founded to check injustice and the excesses of colonial rule.[2] But as it happens with such secret societies, as we have already noted, they easily become a reservoir for recriutment of organized criminals. With the overthrow of the Manchus, the Triad Society members were left with no more political objectives to hang on; as a result, it is noted that as its members were driven by greed and love of wealth, they began to devote themselves to full-time criminal careers.[3] This led to the break-up of the Society into many hundreds of small factions which operated independently of each other. Thus as the single unified Society disappeared, each of the separate societies claimed membership of the Triad family.[4]

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1. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 15.

2. Giovanni Schiavo, The Truth about the Mafia and Organized Crime in America, New York, 1962: 32-38; A Bequai, Organized Crime: The Fifth Estate, Lexington, Mass., 1979: 12-16.

3. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 27.

4. ibid.: xiii.

From Political to Underworld Activities

During the early nineteenth century the declared political objective of the Triads was the overthrow of the Imperial House of Manchu and this they pursued through insurrections and propaganda aimed at the masses. Armed insurrections formented by the Triads burst out in various places in the provinces of Kwangtung (1802, 1817, 1832, 1837), Kiangsi (1809, 1814), Kwangsi (1810, 1820-21, 1832), and Hunan (1832), among others.[1]. The insurrections continued, too, in those regions where the Triads had previously been active: in Taiwan in 1802 and 1832, and in Fukien in 1837. By this time, however, the headquarters of the Triads had already been transferred to the Kwangtung-Kwangsi area, and by the 1840s they had apparently become the largest and most influential secret anti-Manchu organization in China.[2]

One of the guiding principles of Triad propaganda against the Ch'ing was to put forward everywhere the idea that old Chinese customs were being trampled underfoot, and the propaganda hinged upon the slogan fan-Ch'ing fu-Ming ('Overthrow the Ch'ing and restore the Ming'), and it ran

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1. J. Chesneaux, Popular Movements, op. cit.: 49.
2. ibid.

like a red thread through all the documents of the society.[1] It was celebrated in songs, and rhymed verses and it appeared in the legend of the origin of the Heaven and Earth Society, on its banners, on the members' identification cards, and on other objects that were reproduced in the publication of the society's material.[2] For example, during the ceremony of sacrifice to the Five legendary Founders of the society, the members used to sing the following quatrains:

> We will give the Manchus no rest
> In the Hung-hua Pavilion
> We swore in Heavens's name
> To overthrow the Ch'ing and restore the Ming.[3]

Dozens of similar verses like the above (which initiates are required to recite when burning various kinds of incense) could be cited, for almost every page of the ritual text collected by the authorities contains this appeal to overthrow the Ch'ing and restore the Ming.[4] That this was the fundamental purpose of the organization, viewed as honourable by the temper of the period, was well illustrated by the question put to the initiates at the moment of admission into the Society, 'Why are you here?', and they

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1. ibid: 52.

2. Historical Materials on Modern Secret Societies, Peking, 1935, chapter 1: 3b, 7b, 10a-18a, 26a, 29a; 31b.

3. Documents of the Heaven and Earth Society, Shanghai, 1947: 47.

4. W. Blythe, op. cit.: xiii.

were required to answer, 'To overthrow the Ch'ing and restore the Ming'.[1]

It was in fact in the south that the real, and final show-down between the proscribed Triad Society and the Manchus was said to have come to a head. The members of the Republican Party, which was led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen[2] and which dominated the Provincial Assemblies in the south, had attempted as early as 1859 an unsuccessful revolt. Dr. Sun, himself a Triad member and a 426 Fighter official, then fled the country and set out to canvas support among the Overseas Chinese in Japan and the U.S. for the Republican cause, and the Triad branches in Honolulu, Chicago and other places were fully utilized for the dissemination of the Republican propaganda and for the collection of funds for the Party from Chinese residents in foreign countries.[3] When in 1909 the Provincial Assemblies sought for the immediate setting up of a National Parliament and the Prince Regent demurred, issues

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1. Historical Materials, op. cit. Chapter 4: 3a, 15b.

2. W.P. Morgan, Triad Societies, op. cit.: 24-25. Dr. Sun who joined the Triad Brotherhood about 1886 and devoted himself to the revolutionary cause soon discovered that his enthusiasm for the proclamation of a Republic was received with great reserve. Triad tradition postulated an Emperor of Chinese ethnic stock, not a foreign-style president of a Republic; Sun Yat-sen, Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary, London, 1918: 190-198.

3. In 1894 Sun founded his own society, the Hsing Chung Hui (Revive China Society), which in its organization followed the traditional secret society pattern with the swearing of a blood-oath of brotherhood and the use of secret signs and language: B. Martin, Strange Vigour: A Biography of Sun Yat-sen, London, 1944: 101; W.P Morgan, op. cit.

were finally joined. The Republicans who had considered the Prince Regent's promised reform a mere window dressing, resolved to fight on until the Manchus were driven out and a Republic proclaimed.[1] In the ensuing revolt by the Republican Party which was behind the Assembles' demand, the Manchus were driven out from China in 1911 and in January 1912 the country was declared a Republic with Dr. Sun Yat-sen as its President.[2] Dr. Sun himself visited the Ming tombs and there expressed satisfaction that the Manchus had finally been overthrown. The Triads had finally achieved their political objective but China's troubles, however, were by no means over and the Ming dynasty had not been restored, but at least the Chinese were once again in control of China.[3]

The assistance given by the Triad Society to the Republican Party resulted in its virtual official recognition by the new government and, freed from restrictions, it expanded to an even greater extent than before. Its power as a lobbying force became such that ambitious civic and military officials were usually bound to join the Society in order to further their ends, and merchants and traders found that membership and subscription to the Society greatly eased their commercial ventures. However, as power often

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1. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 26-27.
2. ibid.
3. With the establishment of the Republic, the Society was said to have disintegrated and self-styled triad gangs blossomed in Hong Kong in common with the rest of China, and the activities of these gangs became mostly criminal. Rather like New York, for example, having its 'West 46th Street Gang' and its 'North 22nd Street Gang', Hong Kong came to have its 'Fuk Yee Hing Triad', and its 'Wo Shing Wo Triad', amongst others; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 26, 63-66.

corrupts, so the Society became increasingly corrupted and was said to have disintegrated into gangs whose activities became largely criminal.[1] Opinions as to the exact time when the Triad Society changed from being a political organization to a criminal organization, as in the case of the Sicilian Mafia, are not, however, clear cut. One perspective maintains that from the nineteenth century onwards, the criminal and political aspects of its activities were inextricably linked, and that they represented two facets of the same sociological reality, provoked by the sheer severity of imperial order. But in modern times, it argues, and especially since the Republican revolution, the political function has been assumed by other organizations: political parties, trade unions, and various professional and cultural bodies,[2] just as we saw in the factors that led to the decline of the mafia power in Sicily. The Triad was therefore, according to this perspective, forced to fall back on its criminal activities, and thus from then on it became much more than before an instrument in the hands of politicians and intriguers.[3] There was to come, however,

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1. ibid: 26. It is too simple to explain this degeneration, as Morgan does now, by saying that with the establishment of the Republic in 1911, the society saw itself in a political vacuum. The fact is that from the nineteenth century onwards, the political and criminal aspects of its activities were inextricably linked; see J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 34

2. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 34.

3. ibid.

a further turn in the wheel of the Society's history. That would be the impact of the policies and ideology of the Chinese Peoples' Government on Triad traditions, on Triad membership, on Triad-inspired organizations, and on Triad business activities, all of which the new government of the 1950s would find incompatible, if not intolerable, with its own.

It should be noted that during the occupation of China and the island of Hong Kong, between 1941 and 1945, a proportion of these gangs collaborated with the occupying Japanese and thus became a modest Fifth Column. The Japanese were well aware of the importance of the Chinese secret societies, especially the Triads, in the political field.[1] Collaboration with the Japanese was encouraged by the puppet 'Reformed Government' established by the Japanese to integrate all societies on behalf of their masters. The gangs' main reasons for collaboration were believed to be entirely pecuniary because the Japanese allowed them to continue their organization of prostitution, narcotics trafficking and gambling which were the main sources of Triad revenue. After the Japanese surender in 1945, the Triads quickly obtained control of a whole range of organized

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1. W. Blythe, The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies, op. cit.: 31; R. Storry, The Double Patriots: A Study of Japanese Patriotism, London, 1957; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 71-73; F. Robertson, Triangle of Death: op. cit.

criminal activities in the island of Hong Kong,[1] but the end of their hold in mainland China was only a few years away. In the power struggle betwen the Nationalist Government led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists led by Mao Tse-tung, after the two parties had uneasily closed ranks to fight the Japanese, each side appealed to the Triads for assistance for the control of the country.[2]

When, however, the Communist forces finally emerged triumphant in 1950, they found the presence of the Triad societies, whose activities by now had become entirely criminal, a thorn in the flesh of the new Communist Government and the stage was set for their expulsion and that of other secret societies from China.[3] The Government decree of 2 January 1951 declared that all secret societies (Triads) were dissolved as being 'contrary to the best interests of the people'. Regulations issued on 23 February authorized death penalty or life imprisonment for members of

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1. The Japanese were quite willing to use Triad societies to assist them in their task of maintaining order, and organized them into a group known as the Hing Ah Kee Kwan (Asian Flourishing Organization); W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 72-73; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 176.

2. During the Civil War, Chairman Mao described the members of secret societies as 'heroes and brave fellows' who had demonstrated their valour in the past, just to win their support; but as soon as he won the war he no longer regarded them as such; W. Blythe, op. cit. 35; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 113, 157, 168.

3, J. Chesneaux, Popular Movements and Secret Societies, op. cit.: 16

secret societies, and article 8 of the regulations mentioned in particular 'those who utilize feudalistic secret societies to engage in counter-revolutionary activities'.[1] The immediate result of the promulgation of these penalties was a series of mass executions throughout the country of which the majority of the victims were secret society members. This measure, in addition to the Government's land reform program, wholesale nationalization of means of production, and other socialist measures, led to the final exodus of the Triads and other secret societies from China into the European colonies of Southeast Asia - South Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and countries of Western Europe and North America.[2]

As stated previously, prior to the final exodus from the mainland, Triad societies were already flourishing in Hong Kong where they were involved in a variety of organized crime activities.[3] Because of its proximity to the mainland Hong Kong was frequently used by Republican and Triad leaders as a meeting place to discuss their plans of action. The island was also a sanctuary for the society members during the great Taiping and Triad rebellions which raged on mainland almost continuously from the 1850s until the establishment of the Republic in 1912.[4] And with each victory by the Imperial troops a fresh wave of Triad members escaped to Hong Kong. The first Triad arrest were reported to have been made in 1844, two years after it was ceded to the British.[5]

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1. W. Blythe, op. cit.: 34, 35.
2. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 15; F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981; W. Blythe, op. cit.: 34.
3. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 15.
4. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 62.
5. ibid.: 79; F. Robertson, op. cit.; W. Blythe, op. cit.

Hong Kong: Home of the Triads.

Triad Activities in Hong Kong.

In many ways the British crown colony of Hong Kong resembles Marseille: both have a long standing tradition of random violence and organized crime. While Marseille was and still is the heroin laboratory for Turkish opium, Hong Kong has in recent years played a similar major role for Southeast Asia with regards to the heroin from the Golden Triangle region.[1] It should be noted, however, that prior to the Communist revolution, Shanghai was the centre of commerce and industry in China as well as the centre of organized criminal activities of which narcotics trafficking was the most lucrative. By the time the British took over the island of Hong Kong in 1842, Triad and other secret society members were among the inhabitants of the island.[2] The former's activities so alarmed the British administration that in 1845 and again in 1857 two anti-Triad Ordinances were proclaimed aimed at controlling their criminal activities.[3] The first Triad arrests in Hong Kong were reported to have been made in 1844, just two years after it was ceded to the British.[4]

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1. A.W. McCoy, the Politics of Heroin in South-East Asia, New York, 1972: 223.
2. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 172-173.
3. ibid.
4. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 79; F. Robertson, op. cit.

But despite the anti-Triad ordinances, the Triad societies have managed to survive to date.

The Triad is today by far the best known of the Chinese secret societies with its 'headquarters' in Hong Kong and the best known criminal organization with its roots in Asia and branches in many parts of the world.[1] In 1960 it was estimated then that of the three million inhabitants of Hong Kong, 300,000 of these were Triad society members,[2] and that the majority of these are of Chiu Chao dialect group. The chui chao syndicates, who had battled with the Green Gang syndicates for the control of underworld business in Shangai and had participated with the Green Gangs in the massacre in the city of the Communists and revolutionary workers in 1927, migrated en masse to Hong Kong from 1947 to 1950 as the Nationalist forces began to crumble before those of the Communists. This massive influx of China's toughest criminals (chui chaos) coming to join their ethnic group which already comprised eight per cent of the colony's population, caused organized crime to flourish on an unprecedented scale in the colony.[3]

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1. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 14-5.

2. It is believed, however, that not all of these are active members; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: ix. However, for reasos which are not quite clear, the Hong Kong police in 1977 revised this figure down to 80,000 which many responsible and knowledgeable citizens, including several police officers, believe to be far too low; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 115.

3. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 227-228.

By 1939, however, the Triad societies in Hong Kong had evolved into the type of criminal organizations they are known to be today. Although they had engaged in organized criminal activities prior to that time, their allegedly patriotic motivation had hitherto given them some measure of popular support. When the Republic was established in 1912, this prop of patriotism was immediately removed and the various societies could no longer pretend they were a coordinated movement dedicated to a common goal, and henceforth they had to stand in their true light as independent secret associations actuated by self-aggrandisement.[1] Thus, in order to prevent their own destruction by internecine warfare a general agreement on spheres of influence had to be worked out.[2] The Triad influence over the island's population during this time was exercised apparently by seven main groups each of which consisted of a headquarters branch and a number of sub-branches operating in their respective areas. It is believed they were far better organized and disciplined than the societies of today as the various group leaders were able to exercise control over their subordinates.[3]

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1. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 65.

2. ibid.

3. The seven main groups of the Triad which controlled the various regions of the colony include the Wo in western district and Yau Ma Tei, the Tung and Tung in eastern, the Chuen in Mong Kok, the 'Shing' amongst the Hakka of Sham Shiu Po, the Fuk Yee Hing amongst the Hoklo, and the Yee On among the Chiu Chao residents; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 122.

Thus stripped of their patriotic aura, some societies by the late 1920s sought to give themselves some facade of respectability by operating under phony business names. For example, the Fuk Yee Hing Triad society became a registered society with the name Fuk Yee Industrial and Commercial General Association with twelve branch offices to administer its members in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. Similarly, the Yee On operated under the registered name of Yee On Commercial and Industrial Guild.[1] However, their incursions into the employment field had resulted in the establishment of Triad-type associations by labour groups as self-protection measures against Triad interference, and these associations are said to owe no allegiance to any of the seven Triad groups exercising power in Hong Kong. Such an association is believed to be the parent of the present day Luen criminal group which sprang up amongst the metal workers and which soon controlled most of the blacksmiths, foundry workers, tinsmith and dockyard workers.[2] The creation of these new groups has tended to weaken the older societies. The inability of the old secret society officials to crush the new groups encouraged the lesser officials and minor members who were dissatisfied with their share of society's proceeds to attempt to remedy the situation by splitting away from the main branch societies

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1. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 65-67.

2. ibid.

and setting themselves up as leaders of semi-independent units.[1] This situation led to a multiplicity of Triad societies whose unit leaders, anxious to increase their financial rewards by ruthless exploitation of the people, were prepared to defend their sources of revenue against all comers by any means. In this way, according to the Hong Kong police view, any form of central control at group or branch level was largely destroyed and the older leaders became, in effect, mere figureheads with no real authority over the rank and file.[2]

Thus in 1977 it was estimated that there were about thirty five active Triad groupings in Hong Kong, collectively known as the Red Sect, of which six are known to pose serious threat to public security, controlling between 300 and 500 criminal gangs.[3] The most notorious and feared of the Big Six groupings is said to be the 14K group which was formed

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1. It was probably clear to the old Triad officials that any efforts to crush the new groups would have necessitated the use of open violence which could have drawn the attention of the authorities, thereby exposing them to the risk of banishment from Hong Kong; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 70.

2. The Hong Kong police have consistently used the lack of 'central control' amongst the Triad groups to play down the seriousness of the Triad activities and the police connections with the societies; see, for example, F. Bresler, op. cit.: 54; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 71. The action of Triad members in defending the sources of their revenue by any means resembles in many respects the action of the Sicilian mafia in defending their former mainstay,the latifundia; see M. Pantaleone, The Mafia and Politics, op. cit.

3. The Hong Kong police maintain that their revised official figure of 80,000 members includes 8,000 vicious, full-time criminals; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 115-116.

in 1945 by a high-ranking Nationalist general Kot Siu-Wong. The number '14' indicates the place where the group was formed: 14 Po Wah Road, Canton, while the letter 'K' symbolizes 'Karat' gold which is harder and stronger than the soft local type of gold.[1] The Chinese, like the Frenchmen and Italians, tend to group themselves in business and voluntary groups by linguistic dialect and regional origins. As one police officer in Hong Kong put it, almost all of the gangsters who dominate the Hong Kong heroin trade are members of the chui chao dialect group who migrated from the Swatow region of southern China where they originally controlled drug trade and other criminal activities prior to the late 1950s.[2] As McCoy also notes in this regard, 'chiu chao syndicates have controlled much of Asia's illicit drug traffick since the mid 1800s and have played a role in China's organized crime in a manner similar to the Sicilian Mafia and the Corsican and American syndicates'.[3] In Hong Kong the chiu chao elements constitute a powerful Fifth Column strategically placed to take over narcotics activity

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1. ibid: 117; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 31. Having set up his headquarters at No.14 Po Wah Road, Canton, General Kot hastily set about recruiting thousands of members who had no idea of the traditions or even the name of the society they had joined. It became common to refer to 'men of No. 14' or the '14 Association'.

2. F. Bresler, op. cit.

3. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 185-186.

in the colony; they are notorious throughout the area for their activities in vice and smuggling rings. Because of their clannishness they are sometimes called the Mafia of Southeast Asia.[1]

The indiscipline and greed for wealth and power amongst the later triad society members can be gleaned from the activities of the 14K group members. It is noted that the 'Association' was reorganized when it moved into Hong Kong as part of General Kot's overall design for an eventual reconquest of mainland China, but this dream died with his death in 1953.[2] But as Morgan notes, 'Freed from the restrictions imposed by Kot Siu-Wong, the more determined branch leaders embarked on a campaign of extortion and intimidation the ruthlessness of which shocked not only the local societies, but also some of the older 14K officials and branch leaders.'[3] The same behaviour was observed amongst other Triad group society members where it was reported to have resulted in clashes between various groups or even units belonging to different parent societies for the control of the narcotics trade which remains their most lucrative,

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1. F. Bresler, op. cit.: A.W. McCoy, op. cit.

2. F. Bresler, op. cit.; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 178.

3. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 81-82. Kot was deported from Hong Kong in 1950, going first to Hainan, and then to Formosa from whence he continued to issue instructions to his lieutenants in Hong Kong. He returned to Hong Kong in 1951 and managed to rebuild eighteen of the former thirty six sub-branches before his death in 1953; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 31.

criminal enterprise.[1] The chiu chao victory over the Green Gang in Hong Kong was only their first step in gaining a complete monopoly over the importation of Thai morphine and opium and a virtual monopoly over the manufacture and wholesale distribution phases of the colony's drug trade.[2]

In recent years Thailand, one of the three countries making up the Golden Triangle, has emerged as the world's largest exporter of illicit drugs, with Hong Kong by far one of the biggest customers of the products.[3]

Besides narcotics trafficking, Hong Kong Triad societies are also involved, as in the case of the American syndicates and the Sicilian Mafia, in a wide variety of rackets and other underworld activities. There are over 20,000 hawkers in Hong Kong, many licensed, more unlicensed. To prevent the Triad 'bully boys' from usurping their pitch or destroying their goods, the hawkers must either join a Triad society and subscribe to the expenses of the society 'protectors' or pay a flat daily fee to the society collectors.[4] They are

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1. ibid.

2. Since the end of World War II, Marseille and Hong Kong have established themselves as the major centres for heroin laboratories. However, their dominance is now being challenged by a new cluster of heroin laboratories located in the wilds of Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 12.

3. With and estimated 100,000 narcotics addicts out of a total population of 4 million (1970), Hong Kong has the highest percentage of drug users anywhere in the world; Hong Kong Standard, October 17, 1970.

4. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.

said to abduct young girls into prostitution and take a percentage of both the girls' earnings and those of the brothel-keepers.[1] Cinema and dance-hall managers, loan-sharks, stevedores, shopkeepers, restaurant operators, shoe-shine boys, prostitutes, and operators of unscheduled public transport are believed to be among their victims.[2] All these people have to make regular 'protection' payments in order to be guaranteed a place in which to ply their business[3] and they could expect Triad help if an outsider attempted to move into their area. The Triad society members are believed to be in collusive and symbiotic relationships with some corrupt Hong Kong police officers who provide them with a protective shield in return for a cut of the graft,[4] just as in the case of the U.S. syndicates and Sicilian mafia. Triad members are also reported to be involved in contract murders, in the organization and distributing of narcotics to the inmates of Hong Kong's Stanley prison and various other jails through the 'profitable cooperation of prison authorities.'[5] Although the 'political' riots of

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1. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 114-115.

2. ibid: 120.

3. For a similar 'protection tax' imposed by the U.S. syndicates, see A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, Organizing Crime, New York, 1981: 65-76; W.J. Chambliss, On the Take: From Petty Crooks to Presidents, Bloomington, Indiana, 1978: 36-49, 55-60.

4. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 38-52; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 116-125.

5. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 119.

October 10, 1956, were not inspired by the Triad societies,[1] they were reported to have helped to develop the riots and profited from them as they whipped up emotions to cover up their looting activities. The Government's report on the riots notes that some Triad members were issued with bundles of cheap paper flags of one of the political factions involved in the basic riot, and these they sold at exorbitant prices to pedestrians and motorists as safe-conduct passes, beating up anyone who refused to buy and smashing the vehicles of those motorists who attempted to crash the barricades.[2] Again, as in the case of the American syndicates and the Sicilian Mafia, official corruption has to a large extent helped to perpetuate the existence of the Triad societies in Hong Kong despite the belatedly organized anti-Triad Society Bureau within the Criminal Investigation Branch of the Hong Kong Police Department in 1956 in the wake of the Riots.

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1. The riots are said to have begun when the supporters of the Taiwan government were told by the authorities that they could not paste paper flags of the Nationalist Government on the outside walls, and this they regarded as an insult to the Taiwan government; F. Robertson, op. cit.; Report on Hong Kong Triad Riots, Hong Kong, 1956, passim.

2. F. Robertson, op. cit.

The Police-Triad Connections

The Triad-Police connections in Hong Kong bear a classic resemblance to the connections of the officials with organized criminals in the United States and Sicily which we have examined in the previous chapters. It once again would illustrate the point that in order for organized criminals to find a permanent foothold in any society they would require, to borrow Chairman Mao's phrase from a political context, 'a supportive sea of partisans around them in order to survive'.[1] The official view of the Hong Kong police on the activities of the Triads has consistently differed with those of the colony's press and other writers and one often gets the impression that the two sides are not looking at the same phenomenon. Apparently as a result of the connection of a large section of its officers in the middle and low echelon of the force with the Triad society operatives and the embarrassing publicity this has caused, the Royal Hong Kong police official line on the Triad societies has invariably tended to minimize the seriousness of the Triad involvement in organized criminal activities in the colony.[2] While this official line is prepared to admit that Triad society

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1. Cited in F.A. Ianni, A Family Business: Kinship and Social Control in Organized Crime, New York, 1972: 40.

2. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 56; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 121. Similar police line in the U.S. and Sicily has tended to minimize the impact of the activities of the American syndicates and the Sicilian mafia; W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 96; M. Pantaleone, op. cit.

members have been involved in serious organized criminal activities abroad in such places as the United States, Europe, Canada, Australia and other countries, it at the same time would like the public to believe that at home in Hong Kong and other areas of Southeast Asia they exist largely in name only.[1] It maintains that the societies today have degenerated from strictly controlled, politically motivated organizations into loose-knit gangs of criminals which usurp the names of the Triad Societies of years past.[2] In the face of the available evidence this official view seems hardly credible. It should be noted, however, that not all Hong Kong police officers subscribe to the official view, especially those who recognize the seriousness of the situation and who are not on the take. The relationship which exists between the Triad society members and corrupt Hong Kong police officers has all the earmarks of similar relationships between the American syndicates, the Sicilian mafia and the corrupt police officers in those societies in terms of payoffs and protection.[3]

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1. F. Bresler, op. cit.

2. ibid.

3. W.J. Chambliss, On The Take: op, cit.: 50-52, 88-100, 237-248; A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 97-114; G. Servadio, Mafioso: A History of the Mafia from its origins to the Present day, New York, 1976: 253-254.

The current strength of the Hong Kong police force is over 20,000 of which ten percent are officers and of whom the overwhelming majority are white and mainly British, and none of these hold any rank lower than that of inspector. The lower ranks which constitute the remaining ninety percent are made up largely of ethnic Chinese who are undereducated, and apparently poorly paid. Only about ten percent of them speak good enough English to qualify to wear a red tab on their sleeve indicating that they are English speaking. It is within the lower ranks, though by no means limited to them, that corruption is reported to be most rampant and the Police-Triad connections most evident,[1] especially in the areas of drug trafficking and other money-making rackets. Some of these officers usually are not content with just taking handouts, like their American counterparts, from the Triad syndicates, but instead they often set up their own criminal networks. As a result it is not unusual for a Hong Kong police officer to leave the force as a millionaire.[2]

The first revelation of any large-scale graft and corruption in the force was reported in the late 1960s. As one newspaper noted, 'while the police offensive (which began in the mid 1960s) in no way inhibited the growth of the narcotics traffick, it made many Chinese police sergeants millionaires. The corruption was so pervasive that in

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1. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 39-40.

2. CBC Documentary: Connections: Organized Crime in Canada, Part Two, 'The Hong Kong Connections' June 13, 1977.

August 1969 the mere hint of an anti-corruption campaign produced a wave of resignations by senior Chinese detectives and sergeants.'[1] One such resignation occurred that year in the case of a staff sergeant named Lai Ma Yau, and two years later, 1971, it was authoritatively estimated that his assets were worth nearly US$6 million. Ironically, he was not arrested until 1977 when he was charged with having 'unexplained assets disproportionate to his official income'; and when he was convicted in 1978 he was jailed for only two years and ordered to compensate the Crown to the tune of US$3.1 million. However, inflation and shrewd investment as a 'merchant' over the years enabled him to pay over immediately US$2.3 million and to meet the balance shortly by arranging mortgages on his property.[2]

The case of Superintendents Peter Godber and Ernest Hunt in July and August respectively 1973 points to the fact that the Triad-police connections are not limited to the ethnic Chinese police officers only. Godber who was charged and eventually convicted, after his extradition from Britain, of corruptly accepting HK$25,000, although it was widely known that the real amount he stashed away was more than four million English pounds, was the 'first high-ranking British police officer to take a leaf out of the Chinese sergeants' book and set up his own corruption network instead of

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1. South China Morning Post, August 28, 1969; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 231.

2. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 40.

receiving payoffs from the Chinese.'[1] Although he was jailed for only four years, it was believed that Godber had acquired some three hundred thousand pounds in various bank accounts. Similarly, Hunt was jailed for only one year for failing to give a satisfactory explanation of how he was able to spend over sixteen thousand pounds when his official income for that period was just about twelve thousand pounds.[2]

Walter Easey, a former Hong Kong police officer (1962-1968) who eventually left the Force to return to England, has stated that right from the time he left training school he was never in any job in which he was not being paid up, small or large amount; that it was the police in Hong Kong who ran most of the night life and the crime that surrounds it;[3] that they controlled the bars and operated prostitution, gambling and drug rings.[4] Mr. Easey also

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1. ibid: 41.

2. ibid.

3. ibid. In the case of Seattle, Washington, it was found that the Police Vice Squad exerted control over gambling such as licensed cardrooms, stag actvities and the private and often covert gambling games that moved about certain sections of the city. The Squad also set the ground rules and established the price for illegal operation, and collected the payoffs usually on a monthly basis; W.J. Chambliss, On The Take, op, cit.: 239-243. See also F. Robertson, op. cit.: 119-123.

4. CBC Documentary - Connections: An Investigation Into Organized Crime in Canada, Second Part, June 13, 1977; F. Robertson, op. cit.

believes that 'the apparent sudden surfacing of Triad violence in Western capitals around 1974 occurred as the worldwide coordinating centre for Triads - a group of about forty senior Chinese detectives in the Hong Kong Police - fled to Taiwan and other countries in the wake of the corruption purge that followed the scandal of Godber's escape and subsequent extradition. Safe in hospitable Taiwan from extradition, they could no longer arbitrate inter-Triad disputes - most of them in the heroin trade - and matters once settled peacefully by courier or telex from Hong Kong are dealt with locally by the boot and the gun', he said.[1]

The degree to which some corrupt Hong Kong police officers have become not only recipients from but major operatives themselves in organized crime can further be illustrated by an incident that took place in the colony in the late 1970s. Both the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and the Triad Society Bureau (TSB) were each asked to submit a report on all the established gambling places on the island. It turned out that the ICAC's list was far bigger than TSB's list; so they picked one of the ICAC's address not contained in TSB's, to conduct a police raid on - and whom did they arrest? Twenty police officers, including a station sergeant from special Branch, Detective Constables from various divisions, and a sergeant from TSB itself.[2]

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1. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 42; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 124.

2. CBC Documentary: Connections, Part Two, op. cit.: An Interview with Walter Easey; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 50.

Besides setting up their own organized crime rings, corrupt Hong Kong police officers have on occasions used their positions and connections with major syndicate drug dealers to enable the latter to evade justice by escaping to either Thailand or Taiwan which has become notorious as a safe haven for criminals fleeing justice in Hong Kong.

This was the case with Ma Sik Yu and three of the top members of his syndicate who were charged in the late 1960s with, among other things, 'conspiring with a man named Lui Lok to deal in dangerous drugs'.[1] After he heard, apparently through his police connections, of police inquiries homing in on his syndicate, Ma slipped out of Hong Kong and sought shelter on 'The Isle of the Fugitives' as Taiwan was described,[2] to be followed later in 1978 by three of his top members. Ma was said to have built himself into a multi-millionaire by organizing massive shipments of heroin from Thailand into Hong Kong where he was known as 'White Powder Man' by thousands of junkies and small-time dealers.[3] Lui Lok was a Chinese station sergeant at the time of the indictment; he and four other millionaire ex-sergeants, collectively known as 'the five Dragons', fled from Hong Kong into Canada in 1974. However, Canadian

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1. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 43.

2. Hong Kong Standard, October 19, 20, 1978; F. Bresler, op. cit.

3. F. Bresler, op. cit.

police activity eventually drove them out of Canada to seek ultimate refuge in Taiwan in 1977.[1] Seldom, if ever, does any major fugitive from justice in Hong Kong receive anything but token difficulties at the hands of the Taiwan authorities.[2]

Despite these explosive revelations of police-Triad deep involvement in organized criminal activities, the police official reports always tend to play-down the seriousness of the situation, to represent the Triad societies as a little more than an irritant that has been smashed, and to claim that major syndicate corruption has been eradicated.[3] In December 1974 the police let it be known that acting on orders to 'break the Triads once and for all', the entire 20,000-strong Hong Kong force participated in a long-range operation against them code-named 'Halam'.[4] The head of the Triad Society Bureau then, Superintendent Norman Temple who hailed the operation as a grand success, was quoted as saying 'One development we do not want is top Triad bosses getting together under any kind of monolithic leadership.

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1. CBC Documentary, op. cit.

2. F. Bresler, op. cit.

3. Similarly hollow-sounding claims of the break-up of the syndicates were made by the police in Seattle at the height of police-syndicate collusion in that city; see W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.

4. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 53.

We have them broken up now and we intend to keep them that way'.[1] How far the triad organizations have been broken up and with them the police connections was demonstrated two months later when the same Superintendent Temple pleaded guilty in court to 'having control of assets disproportionate to his then present or past emoluments'.[2] Because he volunteered to return to the Crown assets totalling up to eighty-thousand pounds held in bank accounts outside Hong Kong, he received a comparatively lenient sentence of one year's imprisonment.[3]

Shared interests,[4] we would argue, are one of the factors that are at the root of the official police line on the impact of the Triads in the colony's organized crime, and the established symbiotic accommodation between the two has enabled corrupt police officials to utilize Triad syndicates as servants to pursue their own financial goal.[5] It is the same master-servant relationships which prevail within the Sicilian mafia and American syndicate organizations, and it is to a large extent sustained by the nature of the economic

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1. ibid.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.
4. On this issue, see W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 81-114.
5. For the role of organized criminal as servant, see F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance, London, 1976: 124-130.

system. Not all police officers, however, share the official view on the Triad activities in the colony. As one young British detective inspector sees the situation, 'the spirit of Peter Godber is alive and well. Corruption is still going on. It always will be. You can't put an end to it... They are wildly overstating things when they claim that they have smashed the last of the big syndicates...'[1] The official police view becomes even more ironic when it is realized that in June 1979, some two years after the Ma Sik Yu syndicate had supposedly been smashed, a top member of the syndicate was caught in Bangkok smuggling HK$1.5 million worth of heroin to Hong Kong.[2]

Although the Royal Hong Kong Police Force is particularly sensitive to the publicity given to crimes committed by Triad members abroad, yet there is a baffling ambivalence in the official line which insists that the Triad Societies wield little influence in Hong Kong itself; that only ten percent of the Societies' membership is engaged in criminal activities; and that this minority is a disorganized rabble, hoodlums and nothing else.[3] If this view were correct, one would wonder why the Triad Society Bureau would increase its manpower from 189 in 1977 to nearly 270 officers now. The Hong Kong official police line would claim, among

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1. Bresler, op. cit.: 47.

2. ibid: 45.

3. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 58.

other things, that the traditional rituals which enforce the secrecy and power of Triad societies have in effect disappeared,[1] despite their own recent infiltration of such ceremonies. The police also claim that the two highest ranks, 489 and 438, in the Triad promotion ladder, have fallen into disuse. Here again their view conflicts with available evidence, for it was reported that it was 438, the Incense Master, who carried out the initiation ceremony which the police recently infiltrated.[2] It should be noted that during the 1950s, W.P. Morgan, then a junior police officer in the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, meticulously gathered over a period of three years valuable information on the Triad societies for the book he prepared for the Royal Hong Kong Police Force. He was greatly helped in his research when several honourable elders of the society, appalled by the violence of Triad members in the 1956 Hong Kong riots, disgustedly gave the young officer and his team much valuable information, under conditions of great secrecy. Much of the information here, especially on the Triad's internal organization, structure, and initiation ceremonies, is derived from him. Unlike the Sicilian Mafia and American syndicates where the nature of the internal structure and initiation ceremony has been a matter of speculation, the Triad societies are reputed to have a well-defined internal organization and a system of initiation ceremony for the new recruits and for officers to be promoted.

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1. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 58.

2. ibid.

Internal Organization and Structure of Triad Societies in Hong Kong

It is believed that in Triad's early stages some sort of central control of the Society was exercised from the headquarters of the five main Lodges but this system apparently broke down when the Lodges ceased to exist as effective bodies.[1]

The organization of a traditional Triad society today (in this case in Hong Kong) usually consists of a headquarters branch led, at least nominally, by a respected, venerable member of the society called the Shan chu ('Leader' of the society), and who may or may not have a deputy known as the Fu Shan Chu to assist him. The headquarters is a purely administrative body and is not a branch society of the group; its personnel, who are usually old and respected members or businessmen whose community standing might command some measure of respect when they are engaged in the duties of arbitration, are usually drawn from the various branch societies it controls.[2] The leader who is the most important person at the headquarters and his deputy are frequently referred to as the Tai Lo ('Elder Brother'), and Yee Lo ('Second Elder Brother') respectively, but these are slang and not official expressions. Next in importance in

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1. W.P. Morgan, op. cit: 95.

2. ibid; F. Robertson, op. cit.

the hierarchy are the Heung Chu (an Incense Master), and Sin Fung (a Vanguard) who control the Rites Department of the society and they are said to be responsible for the organization and performance of all initiation and promotion ceremonies. They may also have deputies.[1] The rest of the headquarters personnel are said to be senior officials charged with the five main departments through which the society as a whole is controlled. The Shan Chu, Heung Chu, Sin Fung, and heads of the five departments are said to form the Grand Council of the society.[2] These departments are believed to consist of General Affairs,[3] Recruiting,[4] Organization,[5] Liaison,[6] and Education and Welfare[7] Sections.

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1. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 96-98.

2. ibid; There appears to be a similarity here to the 'Commission' which Professor Cressey and others claim that controls the American syndicates; D.R. Cressey, Theft of the Nation: The Structure and Operations of Organized Crime in America, New York, 1969: 141-161; R. Salerno and J.S. Tompkins, The Crime Confederation, Garden City, New York, 1969. As for the alleged Mafia 'Grand Council', see A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 53.

3. This section is charged with administrative matters, finance, etc.

4. This section is said to be responsible for propaganda, recruitment, registration, investigation of members, etc.

5. Controls the activities of the branch societies, organization of major criminal operations, internal discipline, etc.

6. Said to be responsible for internal communications within the society between headquarters and branches, etc.

7. Believed to be in charge of maintenance of 'schools' for the education of members' children, general welfare work,

funeral arrangements, etc.; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 97-98.

Members are normally known by numbers which are shrouded in Chinese mythology and which are mostly, with few exceptions, divisible by the magical figure three; they also have symbolic names such as Red Rod, White Paper Fan, Grass Sandal,[1] etc. The numbers assigned to the members are 489, 438, 426, 415, and 432 or 49, which indicate the various ranks or positions of the various officials and office bearers.[2] It should be noted that all the code numbers begin with 4 and it is believed to symbolise the world since the ancient Chinese believed that the whole earth was surrounded by four seas and therefore the use of this numeral indicates the universal nature of the brotherhood. The leader, Shan Chu, is usually 489, while his deputy, Fu Shan Chu, along with a few other functionaries, is 438. Thus, while the original significance of these numbers remains obscure, it is strongly suspected that they have a much closer connection with the ancient Chinese Science of numerology than with the society as such.[3] Triad officials are customarily referred to by the sum of their code numbers.

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1. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 143.

2. The four basic ranks within the Triad Society are:

(1) Hung Kwan - 'Red Pole' (fighter official).
(2) Pak Tsz Sin - 'White Paper Fan' (adviser official).
(3) Cho Hai - 'Grass Sandal' (messenger official).
(4) Sze Kau - '49' (ordinary member);

W.P. Morgan op. cit.: 99. Once again there is a striking similarity with respect to the ranks within the American syndicate structure, as put forward by Cressey and Salerno cited above.

3. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 102; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 36.

Thus a 489 official is also known as a '21': the sum of the three digits and the multiple of 3 (representing Creation) and 7 (Death) and signifies the idea of Re-birth which is the primary significance of the society's initiation ceremony. Similarly, a 438 official, the second rank, is known as a '15', a multiple of 3 (Creation) and 5 (Longevity or Preservation).[1]

The figure '15' has a particular fascination for superstitious Chinese and is rooted in a myth. It is believed that around the year 2,000 B.C. a tortoise, a creature noted for its long life, was found with this set of figures engraved on its back thus:

4 9 2

3 5 7

8 1 6

so that no matter in which direction each line is added it will always total 15.[2] The 426 official is known as a '12' which is the multiple of 3 (Creation) and 4 (Earth) conveying the idea of heaven and earth, the two forces that produced man. These three: Heaven, Earth, and Man are believed to form the three sides of the triangle which is the sacred emblem of the society.[3] The 415 official is also known as

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1. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 143; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 103.
2. F. Robertson, op. cit.; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.
3. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 103-104.

a '10' which number, in itself, can convey the idea of earthly perfection, and it stems from the Chinese philosophy of dualism in nature, the principle of Yin and Yang, the opposing forces such as darkness and light, heat and cold, good and evil, life and death, which, when properly balanced, produced harmony and from this harmonious balance of all things was created the third basic force, man.[1] Under this principle, the basic numbers from one to ten were divided so that odd numbers were ascribed to Yang which also governs all heavenly manifestations, while even numbers were ascribed to Yin which governs all earthly matters. The number '9' which is the alternative code for 432 official is said to represent perfection in a heavenly sense. In the code numbers 426, 415, and 432, the number 4 is used not only to denote the sense of a worldwide fraternity but also as a multiplier for the other two numerals in each code and is added to the sum of such multiplication to arrive at the final figure which illustrates the true meaning of the code.[2]

Thus 426 should be resolved as 4 x 26 + 4 which is equal to 108, and this is said to be the strength of a legendary band of patriots who fought against government oppression in the early Sung dynasty. As well, 415 becomes 4 x 15 + 4 which gives 64 and is said to be the square of the famous Pat Kwa or Eight Diagrams believed to be invented by Fuh Teh,

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1. W.P. Morgan, op. cit.

2. ibid: 102; F. Robertson, op. cit.; F. Bresler, op. cit.

one of the mystical Emperors of Chinese mythology. It is also believed that it was from his original 8 diagrams that Fuh Teh, by subsequent combination, expanded them to 64 and it was from these 64 diagrams that the Chinese script is said to have been evolved.[1] The lowest ranking member of a Triad group is a '49', the only number which has a straight-forward meaning and one of the two numbers not divisible by three; however, when multiplied (4 x 9) they equal 36, the number of oaths a new member swears to obey when he joins the society. The myth surrounding the internal organization of the Triad society is also reflected in its initiation ceremony.

Although the numbers game is truly complex, it does indicate not only the rank to which a member belongs but also the degree of fear and power which the rank carries. For instance, the '426' is known to be the most feared and powerful member of any society member, for he is known to be in charge of the musclemen, with the title in Hong Kong, at least of Red Rod. He is reputed to be the executioner, when the death sentence is called for within his own group, the planner and leader of violent attacks against the Hong Kong security forces, rival gangs, or clients who do not pay their protection fees.[2]

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1. F. Bresler, op. cit.; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.

2. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 143.

Triad Initiation Ceremony

As far back as the mid-nineteenth century, first-hand accounts and descriptions of the ritual of the Triad's initiation ceremonies were available. About 1885 an English civil servant, W.A. Pickering, managed to attend this initiation ceremony in China.[1] In the post-war period the British Secretary for Chinese Affairs in the Federation of Malaya, Wilfred Blythe, was one of the recipients of many documents, paraphernalia, and manuscript notebooks of ritual verses seized by the police in raids during initiation ceremonies and on secret premises.[2] In Hong Kong in 1976 much of the regalia used in the initiation ceremony was found in the house of an arrested Triad society member, and in January 1977 similar paraphernalia was seized in Singapore, apparently all in readiness for an initiation.[3] As late as May 1978, the Hong Kong police, using two Chinese police officers as under-cover agents, were able to infiltrate a Triad society initiation ceremony which took place on an off-shore lighter, after a suitable background had been built up for the two officers in a poor class area.[4] A U.S. Drug

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1. J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 15.
2. W. Blythe, op. cit.: xiii.
3. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 145.
4. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 58.

Enforcement Administration (DEA) special agent who participated in a Triad initiation ceremony in the basement in London's Chinatown told his colleagues in 1978 that he was scared and felt very frightened by it.[1] Something that all the mainland Triad societies (prior to their exodus into Hong Kong) had in common, together with the colony's own indigenous societies at the time of Chiang Kai Shek's defeat was a highly ritualized system of initiation ceremonies, blood oaths, passwords, secret hand signals and poems and a rigorously maintained military-style hierarchy of officers and other ranks.

Although the lengthy initiation ritual lasting as long as three days has been abridged drastically because of fear of police raids, it is believed that the full ceremony is still observed by a number of overseas branches of the society, where the ritual is regarded as a nostalgic link with the homeland that their ancestors may have left more than 150 years ago. Since the full account of the initiation rituals would run into several pages,[3] we treat here only the salient aspects of it which, in many respects, resemble the alleged initiation ceremony in the Sicilian

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1. ibid: 31.

2. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 142.

3. For a full account of the initiation ceremonies, see J. Chesneaux, Secret Societies, op. cit.: 16-29; W.P. Morgan, op. cit.: 105-160; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 142-156; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 31-36; 59-62.

Mafia, the Neapolitan Camorra, and the American syndicate brotherhoods.[1] Essentially, the ceremony in Hong Kong is said to be held usually in a rectangular room, at the four cardinal points of the compass in keeping with the traditional lay-out of Chinese walled cities and towns, with their four gates; however, to the Triads it represents the City of Willows, the fictional founding place of the Society.[2]. The room is decorated with the banners and flags of mythical bygone heroes. Among the objects to be found in the room, the principal ones are said to be a folded table, an abacus, the Chinese forerunner of today's calculating machine (on which the debts owed by the Manchus, the foreign dynasty which ruled China and which the Triad Society helped overthrow, were said to be counted); a Red Club, symbolizing punishment for traitors, a blood-stained white robe and a rosary, in memory of the monks of Shao Lin monastery, the Sword of Loyalty and Righteousness, and various other tablets.[3]

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1. On this, see, for example, E.J. Hobsbaum, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Manchester, 1959: 34-35; Cesare Mori, The Last Struggle with the Mafia, London, 1933: 39-40; Ed Reid; The Grim Reapers: The Anatomy of Organized Crime in America, Chicago, 1969: 7-23; G. Montalbano, 'La Mafia e il Banditismo', in Rinascita, No. 10, October 1953; H. Hess, Mafia and mafiosi: The Structure of Power, Westmead, 1973; Renato Candida, Questa Mafia, Caltanissetta-Rome, 1960: 102.

2. F. Robertson, op. cit.: 145.

3. W.P. Morgan, op. cit. passim; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 142-145. It should be noted that all the paraphernalias mentioned here have symbolic meanings which are rooted in Chinese mythology.

The recruits are usually introduced by the Vanguard after their names, addresses and ages have been recorded, fees paid, and all responses to questions have been mastered.[1] The ceremony which is officiated by the Incense Master commences when he lights five joss sticks in memory of the First Five Ancestors of the Society. A live chicken is beheaded, and its headless body is wrapped in joss paper, to symbolize the rightful fate of Ma Ning Yee, the Buddhist monk who, according to legend, betrayed his brethren in the monastery near Foochow.[2] Its blood is then drained into a bowl of wine with the words: 'After joining the Hung family remain loyal and faithful. The wicked and treacherous will die like this chicken'.[3] Blood is then drawn from the left middle-finger of each new recruit, mingled with the wine and dead chicken's blood and then drunk by all present to signify blood brotherhood. The 36 oaths of loyalty are then read and sworn to the Triad movement.[4] The new recruits finally enter into a society from which, theoretically, only death can release them, just as it is believed to be the case in

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1. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 17-21; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 146-148.

2. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 59-61.

3. ibid: 32.

4. ibid; J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 23-27; F. Robertson, op. cit.: 149-153.

the Sicilian Mafia,[1] the American syndicates,[2] and the Neapolitan Camorra.[3] Membership entails absolute conformity to the society's code of conduct.

Whereas in the U.S. and Sicily the criminal syndicates and the mafia have been able to carry on their activities for many decades by virtue of the protective shield which the politicians and police have accorded them in return for a cut in the graft and votes during elections, in Hong Kong, similarly, police protection has been instrumental in sustaining the activities of Triad societies in return for cash payoffs. What we have uncovered in the preceding and present chapters would clearly argue that organized crime is a protected crime, and that it cannot thrive without the protection of the established authorities. Furthermore, it is largely the nature of the market economy which provides the basic conditions in which Triad syndicates and police officers are able to pursue their respective ends of wealth and power, and in which shared interests make it easy for the two sides to come to symbiotic relationships in the systematic exploitation of illegal activities for profits which the free enterprise economy makes possible. When, as in the U.S. and Sicily, this symbiosis is joined by party politics in which politicians and parties seek the help of the racketeers and their money on a quid pro quo basis, organized crime becomes an institutionalized and permanent feature in the chain of a society's political economy.

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1. C. Mori, op. cit.: 40.
2. F. A. Ianni, op. cit.: 144
3. H. Hess, op. cit.:94

The manner in which Hong Kong police officials control the operation of vices in the country are in no way different from similar controls which police officials in the U.S. exert over vices in that country. Because the crime operatives and police officials seek the same ends-profits from the operations of these vices and the wealth and power accruing thereof - and because a large minority of the population are willing to patronize their operations, this situation accounts not only for the longevity of the phenomenon in these societies but also for the ineffectiveness of measures to control it.

That the existence of criminal organizations such as the Triad societies, the Sicilian mafia, and the North American syndicates is largely connected with the nature of the economic system is an argument that can best be demonstrated by way of contrast with non-capitalist countries. In the next chapter we shall examine two societies that were once a citadel and safe haven for organized crime when their system was capitalist, but which today are free of the phenomenon as a result of changes from a capitalist to a socialist type of economy.

Conclusion

The Triad Society was one of the many secret societies that flourished in China prior to the turn of the last century and its activities were concentrated mainly in the south of the country. It is believed that it was one of the secret societies founded in China, like the Sicilian mafia, whose avowed objective was to overthrow the Ch'ing dynasty and to restore the Ming dynasty. Its political activities were considered so seditious that the organization was outlawed by Imperial order in 1792; henceforth it became clandestine in operation. It is believed that the Society's assistance to the Republican Party in its fight to overthrow the Manchu dynasty was instrumental and resulted in the virtual recognition of the Society by the new regime when the Manchus were finally overthrown in 1911. At the same time, like the Sicilian Mafia whose decline was brought about by the rise of the peasant leagues and the Socialist and Communist parties, the overthrow relegated the Society to a political oblivion, as its place was now taken over by political parties. Henceforth its members devoted themselves to full-time criminal careers, leading to the break up of the Society into small factions each of which claimed membership of the Triad family. Each side during the civil war courted the assistance of the societies, but when the Communist won

the war members of the organization were forced out of mainland China into Hong Kong, and other places, as their activities were judged by the new regime to be counter-revolutionary and incompatable with its goals and philosophy. The societies today are known to be heavily involved in a variety of organized crime of which trafficking in narcotics is the most prominent. Their long existence in the island is due mostly to the protection extended to them by some corrupt Hong Kong police officials in return for payoffs. The symbiotic accommodation between the Triad society members and some corrupt Hong Kong police officers which shields the former from the hands of the law in their criminal operations bears striking similarities to that which exists in the U.S. and Sicily between the syndicates, the mafia, and corrupt officials in those countries. It is largely the operation of the free enterprise economy which creates the opportunity that brings Triad society members and police officials into a system of symbiotic relationship in which each side is able to pursue their goal of profit and the wealth and power it brings, which is the essence of the capitalist system of enterprise.

CHAPTER 6: CHINA AND CUBA AS TEST CASES

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CHINA AND CUBA AS TEST CASES

Introduction

The argument that organized crime is intimately connected with the operation of the capitalist system of economy would be largely academic and essentially problematic if there were no grounds for comparision and contrast with respect to at least two countries where organized crime once flourished abundantly when their system of economy was capitalism, and in which organized crime is later found to be non-existent when they switched from capitalism to socialism. The transformation from the former to the latter mode of economic system by mainland China in 1950 and by Cuba in 1960 is worth examining, for what happened in those two societies clearly demonstrates this close connection. Prior to the above dates (which mark the beginning of their post-revolutionary history), organized crime in mainland China, especially in the city of Shanghai, exemplified the current situation in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, Singapore, and Taiwan with respect to narcotics trafficking, prostitution, protection rackets, gambling, etc., which were controlled mainly by the Triad syndicates; while Cuba was a miniature present-day New York and Chicago and served as a safe haven for American syndicates and their Cuban confederates. In order to present a clear case of contrast, it is necessary to examine the phenomenon of organized crime in each society before and after the transformation of their economic system from capitalism to socialism.

Organized Crime in China prior to 1950

With the development of a capitalist type economy in the late nineteenth century in China, organized crime became prevalent in many parts of the country and its source was mainly the secret societies that flourished in the country.[1] Although these secret societies portrayed themselves as patriotic organizations formed to liberate China from the yoke of a foreign dynasty and check foreign penetration of the country, the criminal and political aspects of their activities were inextricably linked from the nineteenth century onwards.[2] They represented two facets of the same sociological reality, provoked by the sheer severity of imperial order. With the successful Republican revolution, however, the political function was assumed by other organizations: political parties, trade unions, and various professional and cultural bodies. The Triad (as well as other secret societies) was therefore forced to fall back on its criminal activities and from then on it became much more than before an instrument in the hands of politicians and intriguers.[3] The conversion from patriotic into criminal organizations by the secret societies not only

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1. Jean Chesneaux, Secret Societies in China, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1971: 164.

2. ibid: 34.

3. ibi ibid: 163.

accelerated the spread of organized criminal activities in the major Chinese cities such as Shanghai, but also necessitated a new alliance with the bourgeoisie and officials of the power structure, and a corresponding war against the trade unions and Left-wing organizations.[1]

The Red Band (Hung-Pang), like its numerous offshoots, controlled the opium-smoking dens, gambling houses and brothels. It practised kidnapping and racketeering at the expense of rich tradesmen and exploited the working class. It more or less monopolized the market system for the recruitment of dockers and sailors (many of whom were employed by the Eastern companies), and in the process it appropriated a generous percentage of their wages.[2] Although such was the situation in Shanghai in the Kuomintang period, it is still found today in Singapore and Hong Kong, since the gangster chiefs withdrew to these cities after the Communist victory in 1949.[3] During the early twentieth century the hands of Ch'ing Pang, which had been the ruling power in its own zone in China, were found in innumerable forms of vice and crime - in smuggling (particularly opium), gambling, extortion, prostitution, and protection rackets.[4]

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1. ibid 166; A.W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, New York, 1972: 226.

2. ibid: 34-35.

3. ibid: 35.

4. Wilfred Blythe, The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya: A Historical Study, London, 1969: 21.

Even during the Japanese invasion of China (1937-45) a part of the Triad society, which was supposedly formed for patriotic reasons, could not resist their criminal instinct and fully collaborated with the Japanese ostensibly because the Japanese favoured and encouraged open organization of criminal activities - prostitution, narcotics, gambling, etc.[1]

Tools of the Bourgeoisie

Like the Sicilian mafia and the American syndicates in their role as servant to their legal masters,[2] organized crime in China served a similar role and its members consequently became cannon-fodder in the battles between the different leaders and instruments for the making of their profits.[3] The gangsters' alliance with reactionary forces can be demonstrated by the help which they rendered to Chiang Kai-shek and the right-wing of the Kuomintang (KMT) in 1927 when they decided to get rid of workers' organizations and Communist cadres in Shanghai, which was then a great industrial centre, principal home of the conservative

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1. W.P. Morgan, The Triad Societies in Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1982: 73.

2. For a similar role which the Yakuza play to their masters in the officialdom, see Florence Rome, The Tatooed Men: An American Woman Reports on the Japanese Criminal Underworld, New York, 1975:70.

3. Deng Zhong-xia, Zhong-guo zhi-gong yun-dong jian-shi (Short History of the Chinese Workers' Movement), Peking, 1953: 3-4.

bourgeoisie, and international vice capital.[1] It was the very support the party and its leaders needed to keep control of the working classes, and the support continued until the party and its leaders were driven out of China. Chief among the instruments the Kuomintang used to keep the reaction firmly in the saddle were the notorious gangs of Shanghai which had affiliations in other big cities of China. To understand the character of the Shanghai gangs, it is necessary to combine the characteristics of the Society of December Tenth as utilized by Louis Bonaparte, the Russian Black Hundred, and the modern Chicago variety of racketeers and criminal gunmen. The gangs were known to have dealt in human slaves, opium traffick, kidnappings for ransom, blackmailing, gambling, gun-running, smuggling, protection rackets, and plain, everyday murder.[2]

As in the case of the United States and Sicily crime networks, the rank and file of the Shanghai gangs included people from a variety of social strata: riff-raff of the slum proletariat, most of the detectives and policemen of the French Concession, International Settlement, and Chinese

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1. Until it was ceded to Western powers after China's humiliating defeat in the first Opium War (1839-1842), Shanghai was little more than a fishing village. As Western merchants and commercial goods flooded into China in the latter half of the 19th. century, Shanghai became China's largest and most modern city. But, in reality, it was not a Chinese city, for the imperial government divided it among the British, French, Americans, and other foreign powers, which ran their concessions as they saw fit; A.W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, New York, 1972: 224.

2. H.R. Isaacs, 'Gang Rule in Shanghai', China Forum, May, 1932: 1-7, Extract from Five Years of Kuomintang Reaction, Shanghai, 1932.

municipality, military officers in the local garrison commander's headquarters, officers of the Bureau of Public Safety, minor politicians and jobholders, most factory foremen and labour contractors, Kuomintang 'labour leaders' (trade union officials),[1] as well as many petty merchants.[2] The remunerative activities of the gangs mentioned above were generally carried out by the lower strata of the gangs, however. Because these gangs were also politically utilized on behalf of the reaction by its leaders they also drew into their membership bankers, rich businessmen, highly placed politicians and KMT officials.[3] As we indicated in the preceding chapter, the 'Big Three', as they were frequently called in the Chinese press, were at the head of these criminal organizations as well as being the overlords of the French Concession.[4]

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1. The trade unions had passed under the control of the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek since the latter's break with the Communists in 1927; Kuomintang (KMT): the Chinese name for the Nationalist party founded shortly after World War I and headed then by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek before he and his supporters were driven to the island of Taiwan.

2. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 164. For similar membership in the crime networks in the U.S., see W.J. Chambliss, On The Take: From Petty Crooks to Presidents, Bloomington, 1978: 61-80; W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff (eds.) Whose Law, What Order? New York, 1976: 169.

3. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.

4. They were Tu Yueh-shang, Hwang Ching-yung, and Chang Siao-ling; J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 165; Y.C. Wang, 'Tu Yueh-sheng (1888-1951):'A Tentative Political Biography', The Journal of Asian Studies, volume 26, No. 3, (May 1967): 135.

The basic defect of the Nationalist government, so far as the urban economy was concerned, was that the regime's leadership which placed its highest priority upon the military and political unification of the nation valued the urban economy but as a source of revenue, and thus devoted little attention to the problems of economic development. The fundamental attitude of the regime toward the financial and business groups was revealed with clarity during the first years after Chiang's Northern Expedition. In early 1927 these groups had been among the most ardent supporters of Chiang and the anti-communist wing of the Kuomintang.[1] They had felt desperation and panic during the Northern Expedition when the striking workers, presumably under the leadership of the communists, struck for higher wages and even assumed control of the factories.[2] As Coble notes, when the moneyed classes of Shanghai in early April 1927 contributed a reported ten million yens to Chiang Kai-shek in return for repression of revolutionary workers and communist elements in the city, it appeared that an alliance between China's capitalist class and Chiang Kai-shek had been consummated.[3]

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1. Lloyd E. Eastman, The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937, Cambridge, Mass., 1974: 228.

2. H.R. Isaacs, The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution, 2nd rev. ed., Stanford, Ca., 1961: 111-151.

3. Parks M. Coble, 'The Shanghai Commercial, Financial, and Industrial Elite and the Kuomintang, 1927-1929', Seminar paper, University of Illinois, 1971: 11.

In what has been known as the 'White Terror' massacre,[1] following Chiang kai-shek's visit to Nanking in 1927 and his rapprochement with the bankers there, the bourgeoisie utilized the gangs to slaughter revolutionary workers who had risen against economic conditions.[2] In Shanghai, working in close cooperation with the foreign police forces the gangs hunted down and butchered thousands of revolutionary workers and intellectuals in all sections of the city in which about 4,000 young men and women were known to have lost their lives.[3] Tu Yueh-sheng, who was the head of the Green Gang, was reported to have led the attack on the revolutionary workers and Communist labour unions[3] for which he was rewarded with the rank of major general in the KMT army, and soon became one of Shanghai's most respected citizens. As one Chinese historian

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1. The gangsters portrayed this purge of the workers as meritorious, in that the country was saved from the scourge of Communism. A more objective appraisal tends to show, however, that the gangsters acted in the interests of the side from which the most lucrative rewards could be expected; W. Blythe, op. cit.: 29.

2. Harold R. Isaacs, The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution, op. cit.: 142-145. For a similar massacre of workers and members of Left-wing organizations in Sicily by gangsters sponsored by the bourgeoisie, see Norman Lewis, The Honoured Society, London, 1964: 150-153, 161-163; M. Pantaleone, The Mafia and Politics, London, 1966: 110-111.

3. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 166; H.R. Issaacs, The Tragedy, op. cit.: 135.

4. H.R. Isaacs, The Tragedy, op. cit.: 174-180.

later commented, 'Perhaps for the first time in Chinese history, the underworld gained formal recognition in national politics'.[1] Thus from 1927 onwards, the criminal gangs in China became increasingly an important arm of the Kuomintang and an instrument of the bourgeoisie used chiefly to keep the lid down on the workers' mass movement, to smash strike action through intimidation and control of all the so-called labour organizations.[2] With the smashing of the revolutionary labour unions and the establishment of 'respectable' trade unions which became a tool of the KMT, the gangs assumed full leadership and functioned in that capacity until the Communist victory in 1949.[3]

It should be noted, however, that in China, prior to the Communist Revolution, academic degrees gave access to public office, and degrees were conferred by examination without any apparent regard for family or wealth, and only barbers and certain classes of boatmen, together with their children, were barred from competing for the various grades of the madarinate.[4] But although the moneyed class in China was less

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1. Y.C. Wang, 'Tu Yueh-sheng (1888-1951): A Tentative Political Biographgy', The Journal of Asian Studies, 26, No. 3, (May 1967): 438-439.

2. In the 1920s the gangsters in the United States employed similar tactics against the workers and on behalf of their masters, the employers. For instance, Al Capone, Arnold Rothstein and many others were introduced into labour relations as strike-breakers; F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful, New York, 1976: 131; J. Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, Chicago, 1968: 107-147.

3. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 166.

4. Gaetano Mosca, The Ruling Class, New York, 1939, cited in W.J. Chambliss (ed.), Sociological Readings in the Conflict Perspective, Reading, Mass., 1973: 239.

numerous, less wealthy, less powerful than the moneyed class in the United States is at present, it was none the less able to modify the scrupulous application of this system to a very considerable extent. Not only was the indulgence of examiners often bought with money, the government itself sometimes sold the various academic degrees and allowed ignorant persons, often from the lowest social strata, to hold public office.

Gangsters were also used by the KMT and the bourgeoisie as spies among the workers; militant workers were thus detected and subsequently butchered. In addition, they served as the direct instrument of native and foreign capitalist exploiters who used them as foremen and labour contractors to swindle the workers of their wages. As Isaacs notes, 'Every labour union, every factory, every working-class district is shot through with agents of the gangs who have proved an able supplement to the legalized organs of repression which have helped shatter the working-class movement in the last five years'.[1] Thus under these conditions truly militant leaders of strike movements were arrested, sentenced to long jail terms, or killed and the strike smashed. As Isaacs reports, there was, for example, in September, 1931 the case of Zih Ah-mei, leader of the workers of the French Concession Tramways who were on strike. He was of course arrested,

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1. H.R. Isaacs (ed.), Five Years of Kuomintang Reaction, 'Gang Rule in Shanghai', re-edited from the special issue of China Forum, Shanghai, May 1932: 1-7

charged with being a Communist, and although there was no proof against him, as the case was a planted one, yet he was sentenced to ten years' hard labour and deprived of all civil rights for twelve years upon completion of the sentence.[1]

An anonymous worker correspondent made the following observation in a Chinese paper about the gangsters and their masters in 1932:

'If they (the gangsters) only stand right opposite to the workers, harshly oppressing the workers, that would not increase our difficulties so much. We would know then that they will always be confederates of the capitalists. If we want to fight capitalism we must have a hand-to-hand fight with its servants. What is our most difficult task is that the influence of the gangs has penetrated right to the midst of the workers to demoralise them. In our factory ALL the powerful workers are members of the gangs. The reason is that if they join the gangs, they are sure of their jobs. The gangsters are not afraid of any unemployment. Their organization centres around one man. A strong-willed man with thirty to fifty disciples can work within his territory. They are afraid of nobody but the ruling class, the capitalists. It seems to me that if the vanguard of the working class could cause their penetration to within the worker masses to be as effective as the gangsters, our victory will come even sooner'

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1. ibid.

(our emphasis).[1] As it turned ou, such a victory became a reality seventeen years later when the working class and the socialist triumphed over the forces of the KMT and their capitalist confederates.

Furthermore, the Kuomintang-controlled trade unions were placed entirely in the hands of the gangsters, much as it is the case in many labour unions in the U.S.,[2] who, as officials, could act in labour disputes independent of the rank and fill. These 'labour leaders' frequently were said to live in comfortable houses whose monthly rental amounted to more than a worker could earn in a year.[3] The alliance of the gangsters and Kuomintang-controlled unions was also evident in industrial racketeering which they operated. They got a rake-off from workers' wages, from every job given to a worker, from the squeeze manipulated by foremen and contractors, from direct subsidies provided by grateful factory-owners, from selling opium to workers, and from buying their children as slaves.[4] As Isaacs notes, 'It is not uncommon to hear a

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1. An anonymous Letter to China Forum, January 20, 1932, cited in H.R. Isaacs (ed.) Five Years of Kuomintang, op. cit. (our emphasis).

2. J. Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, Chicago, 1968: 144-145, 149. As Bell notes for the U.S., 'control of a union local means control of the host of rackets that are spawned on the docks. A victorious clique has a number of concessions it can parcel out... including kickback for jobs, etc... But the biggest prize of all was the loading racket'. D. Bell, The End of Ideology, New York, 1967: 183.

3. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 168.

4. ibid.

pudgy-faced, fat-fingered capitalist remark at Chinese banquets: "Yes, much that is bad can be said about the gangsters, but they have served one good purpose - keeping down the workers..."'[1] It was further noted that in Shanghai and China generally, where oppressed, exploited workers were forbidden to organize or to hold a single demonstration without meeting machine-gun bullets, gangsters on the other hand were organized in a great secret society for vice and crime and were utilized by the Shanghai bourgeoisie and the Kuomintang against the revolutionary working class.[2] As Isaacs concludes, 'As in the big cities of the United States, so in Shanghai, social and political decandence has brought gangsters to the top and they are used to keep the productive proletariat in a state of slavery.'[3]

Such was the state of organized crime in capitalist China up to 1949; the same situation was equally true of Sicily and the United States during the same period. If today, however, organized crime is eradicated in China while it continues to thrive in the other societies, it would not be because the Chinese have recently become more law-abiding people, or

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1. H.R. Isaacs, op. cit. In the 1920s and 1930s gangsters in the United States also offered their services as insurance against upsets of any kind, from the unions, from competition or from bombing. The cost of protection was usually passed on to customers in higher prices by businesses which negotiated contracts with mobster-controlled unions; F. Pearce, op. cit.; John Kobler, Capone: The Life and World of Al Capone, London, 1971: 231-233.

2. H.R. Isaacs, op. cit.

3. ibid.

acquired a higher standard of morality, or that the Chinese police have discovered a better method of policing than their counterparts in the U.S. and Sicily. What has made the crucial difference in our view is the economic path China chose after 1949 which the other countries do not follow.

China and Opium Trade.

It should be borne in mind that the narcotics trade which has become an acute problem in recent years to the countries of Southeast Asia, Europe, North and South America was first introduced into China on a large scale in the 1820s by the British merchants despite the ban placed on the product by the emperor.[1] It was the British refusal to desist from this deadly merchandise (imported from India into China) which led to the first Opium War and resulted in China being forced to open treaty ports to European merchants and thereby to opium imports.[2] By 1870, in the aftermath of yet another Opium War (1856-1858) with the British, which forced the Chinese imperial government to legalize the importation of opium, British merchants were said to be supplying the opium habits, which they diligently fostered and fed, of an estimated 15

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1. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 60-61.

2. J.M. Scott, The White Poppy: A History of Opium, New York, 1969: 84-85.

million Chinese opium addicts.[1]

Following the Opium War, however, China began to grow her own opium on a massive scale in the 1860s and in 1880 China was known to have imported more than 6,500 tons, most of which was produced in India.[2] Karl Marx commented at the time that 'the Chinese government will try a method recommended by political and financial considerations - viz: legalize the cultivation of poppy in China.'[3] As a result, Chinese provincial officials started encouraging local production which transformed China into a nation of addicts, a de facto legalization of domestic cultivation and importation having been sanctioned in the country in 1858. Although only the British government possessed the monopoly of opium trade in the early 19th century in Asia,[4] by the later part of the century every nation and colony in Southeast Asia had a state-regulated opium monopoly[5] for the pursuit of capital.

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1. David E. Owen, British Opium Policy in China and India, New Haven, Conn., 1934: 14-18, passim; Jonathan Spence, Opium Smoking in Ch'ing China, (Honolulu: conference on Local Control and Protest During the Ching Period, 1971: 16.); F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981: 68.

2. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 369.

3. Shlomo Avineri, Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization, Garden City, New York, 1969: 361.

4. David Owen, op. cit.

5. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 63; G. Kolko, The Politics of War: The World and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1943-1945, New York, 1968: 80-81. The Philippines became an exception soon after the Spanish were replaced by the American colonial government in 1898, the U.S. having banned opium and its derivatives in 1886; H. Taylor, American Diplomacy and the Narcotics Traffic, 1900-1939, Durham, N.C., 1969: 31-32, 43.

For China there were several important reasons to grow its own opium. First, its policy of outlawing opium had never worked because opium business was a lucrative one.

Prior to the Opium War with the British there had been a spectacular amount of opium entering China, and after the war China was still diplomatically and militarily unable to stop the drug flow into the country, as Britain continued to peddle increasing amount of Indian opium. From 1811 to 1821 there were over 340 tons of both Bengal and Malwa opium imported annually into China by foreign drug magnates.[1] In the late 1820s and 1830s, because of the ease with which opium could be smuggled and the profits involved, the flow of opium became a flood, and during the next two decades imports from India were reported to be in thousands of tons.[2] While the government of India profited from the opium revenue, China's government was becoming more hard-pressed for funds. It needed money to pay indemnity to the British for having lost the Opium War, and money to pay the cost of suppressing the massive Taiping Rebellion which broke out in 1850. More importantly, China needed to counterbalance the British import of opium into the country.[3] Gradually, most of the governments of Southeast Asian countries came to produce their own opium,[4] and until very recently they came to depend very heavily on its cultivation and importation as a source of revenues.[5]

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1. H.B. Morse, The Trade and Administration of China, London, 1913: 335.

2. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.
3. ibid.: 369-370.

4. F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, New York, 1981: 70; F. Pearce, op. cit.: 151; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.

5. Opium not only became a bulwark of the tax base of colonial India, during much of the nineteeth century it served as the economic pivot around which the whole China trade revolved; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 367; F. Pearce, op. cit.: 151; see especially F. Bresler, The Chinese Mafia, op. cit.

The KMT and Narcotics Trade

Chiang Kai-shek's opium programs further illustrate the gap between the KMT's original political idealism and the sordid reality of conditions under his dictatorship. Like the warlords, Chiang who needed money to finance his military campaigns, legalized the opium trade in August 1927, setting up a monopoly to tax opium sales. However, before public pressure forced the scheme's abolition in July 1928, the government was believed to have made an estimated 40 million Chinese dollars.[1] Although Chiang and the Nationalists began a well-publicized campaign against opium in 1934, its real objective was probably to gain control of the financial base of Chiang's warlord opponents.[2] Having appointed himself commissioner for opium suppression in 1935, the Nationalist leader was able to reroute opium moving toward the coast from Yunnan and Kweichow so that it was sent north through Hankow on the Yangtze River and then to Shanghai, thus depriving Kwangsi Province of the opium revenue.[3] According

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1. Garfied Huang, 'Three Aspects of China's Opium Problem', Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal, 16, July 1930: 407-415.

2. The KMT was known to have been deeply involved in the management of the Golden Triangle opium trade. Its army sent to reconquer southern China, although it failed militarily, succeeded in monopolizing and expanding the Shan State's opium trade. With the assistance of the CIA, anxious to halt the liberation movement, the KMT freely traded in narcotics; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 126-145; The New York Times, March 9, 1952: 8; ibid, September 17, 1963: 45.

3. Loss of opium revenue was said to be one of the motives behind Kwangsi's 1936 agitation against the Nationalist regime; F.T. Merrill, Japan and the Opium Menance, New York, 1942: 33.

to one source, during the period 1934-1937 the government made an estimated 500 million Chinese dollars from its suppression program.[1]

Even during the Japanese invasion of China in 1937 which halted the flow of heroin from China to the United States, the drug traffick within China continued unabated and the KMT and Japan, which played an official role in the narcotics business in occupied China, continued to freely trade opium across mostly stagnant battle lines. Nanking, under Japanese occupation, was believed to have an estimated fifty thousand heroin addicts, while in Shanghai about one-sixth of the 1.5 million dollars spent every month was used to buy heroin.[2] With the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, Chiang Kai-shek's forces made a speedy return to Shanghai, acting with the support of the American government and the cooperation of the defeated Japanese in order to reaffirm Nationalist control and forestall the Communist takeover. Once again corruption and vice, including narcotics, flourished with the active participation of the Nationalist officials.[3] In fact, China remained the opium centre of Asia until the Communist forces won the civil war in 1949. One would have expected that the post-war elimination of China as a major drug centre and the end of the colonial era and its monopolies in Southeast Asia would have improved prospects for solving the narcotics problem in Asia, but exactly the opposite appears to have happened. Instead, Southeast Asia, particularly the Golden Triangle, has more than filled the gap left by China

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1. ibid: 32.

2. League of Nations, Advisory Committee, Report to the Council on the Work of the 24th. Session, 1939: 9-10.

3. Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby, Thunder Out of China, New York, 1946: 311.

especially in terms of supplying heroin for the European and North American markets.[1]

Thus, as the evil that men do often lives after them, the opium business in Asia which was carefully, albeit corruptly, organized and controlled in a plain profit motive by an unholy alliance of colonial officials, local governments, a new breed of entrepreneurs[2] and gangsters has continued to pose serious national and international problems long after the colonies and their masters are gone; it has, moreover, continued to play an important part in capitalism's political economy as a mechanism for reducing conflicts and dilemmas stemming from its basic contradictions.[3] Even though almost all countries today have legislations controlling or banning the production and sale of opium, this has not stopped the

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1. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 383.

2. T.B. Koh, 'Drug Use in Singapore', International Journal of Criminology and Penology, 2, February 1, 1974: 51-52; H.G. Alexander, Narcotics in India and South Asia, London, 1930; A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, Organizing Crime, New York, 1981: 25.

3. Opium was said to have offered a resolution of some important dilemmas for the expanding trade of European capitalist countries. The creation of capital through trade was an important and valued source of income for capitalists and nations alike. For a full account of the use of opium as a mechanism for reducing conflicts and dilemmas resulting from capitalism's basic contradictions, see Alan A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, Organizing Crime, op. cit.: 7-10, 20-21, 28. Also see D. Bell, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, New York, 1976.

trade because the profit motive has always been an over-powering factor in capitalist enterprise.

The U.S. Bureau of Narcotics reported in 1970 that by the end of the 1950s, Burma, Laos, and Thailand together had become a massive producer of opium, and the source of more than half the world's present illicit supply of the substance.[1] Ironically, the U.S. foreign policy before 1970 had indirectly encouraged the growth of heroin traffick as it sought to strike alliances with gangsters, despots and dictators willing and able to check communist insurgency.[2] The Guerinis of Marseille gained power and status from their role in smashing Communist strikes; the CIA operatives supplied them with arms and money to assault Communist pickets. Their political influence and control of the docks created the perfect environment for the growth of Marseille's heroin laboratories at a time when 'mafia' boss Lucky Luciano was seeking an alternate source of heroin supply.[3] This policy allowed most southeast Asian generals and politicians before 1970s to deal in heroin in return for their anti-communist stance.[4] While capitalist countries in Asia continue to wrestle with the heroin problem, China has resolved its share of the problem from 1950 onward when the country embarked upon a transformation of its political economy from a capitalist to a socialist one.[5]

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1. 'The World Opium Situation' U.S. Burean of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, Washington, D.C., 1970: 29.

2. See F. Bresler, op. cit.; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 37-49.

3. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 44-45.

4. ibid.

5. See the next section on how these changes in the economy were achieved, especially with regards to the production of opium.

Situation of Organized Crime in China after 1950.

Organized criminals, it has been noted, have traditionally gone to 'where the power is'[1] in the society, and in the case of conflict, it has traditionally supported the winning side.[2] Such support, however, has tended to be given on the basis of a quid pro quo. As we indicated earlier, the secret societies in China assumed the role of gangsters after 1912 when the Republic was established and they could no longer pretend to be movements dedicated to the liberation of China from the Manchus. Under the Nationalist party which ruled China from 1912 until the Communist victory in 1949, the gangsters found a comfortable accommodation with the bourgeois party and were able to carry out their criminal activities for the benefit of both sides.[3] In the ensuing war between the Nationalist party led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist forces led by Chairman Mao, the gangsters saw the hand-writing on the wall and right from the start allied themselves with the party of the bourgeoisie.[4]

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1. G. Servadio, Mafioso: A History of the Mafia from its Origins to the Present Day, New York, 1976: 143, 213-217.

2. W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 154-155; A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 36-39.

3. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 164; H.R. Isaacs, Five Years of Kuomitang Reaction, op. cit.; ibid: The Tragedy of Chinese Revolution, op. cit.: 142-145; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 226-227.

4. J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 33-34.

As indicated in the preceding chapter, the new Communist government in Peking upon assuming power in 1950 found the presence of the gngsters and their secret societies incompattible with the nature of the new society it wished to build. In a series of decrees of which those of 2nd January and 23d February, 1951, were the most significant, the secret societies, and with them their criminal activities, were outlawed.[1] The measures authorized death penalty or long imprisonment for membership in the secret societies. That the gangsters were a thorn in the flesh of the new government was clearly revealed by the governments's announcement which stated that anti-Communist elements were becoming increasingly active in various parts of the country, that there was a stiff opposition to the governments's land reform, and that armed defiance was spreading.[2] In Kwangsi Province alone 3,000 officials sent to enforce the Communist administrative measure had been killed, the announcement said.[3] That organized crime cannot exist without the cooperation and collusion of those in authority can be demonstrated in the case of China. With the promulgation of the decrees against the gangsters and their secret societies and the consequent execution and/or life imprisonment meted out to those found in violation,[4] the gangsters who had found China a safe haven

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1. W. Blythe, op. cit.: 34.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.

for their operation under the Kuomintang regime, now found China a very hostile place in which to carry out criminal activities. The result was a mass exodus of the gangsters from mainland China into the colonies of Southeast Asia and countries of Europe and North America.[1] While these countries today continue to be plagued by incidents of organized crime,[2] it can be argued that Communist China effectively denied organized criminals any foothold in the country right from its foundation.

The new Chinese government was equally determined to eradicate the opium trade and production which had plagued the country since its introduction by the British in the late eighteenth century, and it had both the will and the organization to do so. As one visitor noted during the civil war, 'in five months of travel in the communist areas I found not the slightest trace of opium in any form'.[3] As well as a change in social attitude, the new Chinese government also recognized that successful opium suppression would require a drastic change at all levels of the economy. By extending its

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1. As McCoy summed up the situation, 'as the Chinese Revolution, after World War II, gathered momentum in the late 1940s, Shanghai's gangsters realized it was only a matter of time until the Communist forces would occupy the city. Most of the city's gangsters had participated in the Green Gang's 1927 massacre of Communist supporters, and so almost the entire underworld migrated en masse to Hong Kong from 1947 to 1950'; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 227-228; J. Chesneaux, op. cit.: 15.

2. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 74-82; F. Robertson, Triangle of Death: The Inside Story of the Triads - The Chinese Mafia, London, 1977, passim.

3. Harrison Forman, Report from Red China, London, 1946: 10.

campaign against cultivation to the most remote areas of China, the new government was able to persuade poppy growers to grow other crops.[1] At the same time harsh penalties against drug overlords and merchants were ruthlessly enforced by a government that had no economic or political obligations to those engaged in the trade.[2] Not only was Shanghai cleaned up and its Western business interests forced out, but its corruption was also eradicated. According to one high ranking Hong Kong customs official, since 1949 there have been no seizures of opium coming from mainland China.[3] Despite such testimony, the defeat of the KMT and America's natural hostility toward revolutionary regimes led the two to portray China during the period of cold war as the centre of the international narcotics traffick which earned Peking the much-needed foreign exchange.[4]

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1. For a detailed account of how the campaign worked in one area of China, see Alan Winnington, The Slaves of the Cool Mountains: The Ancient Social Conditions and Changes now in Progress on the Remote Southwestern Borders of China, London, 1959.

2. This is the crucial difference. In some capitalist countries the enforcement of the drug law often becomes a mere exercise in public relations because some law enforcers and their political masters (as in the U.S. and Sicily) are often recipients of payoffs from drug dealers, or are themselves active participants (as in Southeast Asian countries) in the drug traffick; see W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 52-55, 163-167; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 52-75; M. Pantaleone, The Mafia and Politics, op. cit.: 184-185; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 70; F. Robertson., op. cit.: 119-120, 123.

3. Interview given by Mr. Graham Crookdake, Hong Kong, July 5, 1971, cited in A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 383.

4. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 145.

Cold War Opium Propaganda Against China

The leading American advocate of this propaganda was the former director of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), Harry Anslinger, who joined with Taiwanese officials in vigorously denouncing the People's Republic as late as 1961. He claimed that one primary outlet for the Red Chinese traffick has been Hong Kong through which heroin made in China was smuggled to Malaya, Macao, the Philippines, the Hawaiian Islands, the United States, or to the other direction: India, Egypt, Africa, and Europe.[1] He further asserted that the 'target area' in the U.S. was California which he claimed received more than forty percent of smuggled China's heroin and morphine plants. According to Anslinger, 'the syndicate crowd does not object to dealing with the Reds, as long as the profits are big in terms of dollars'.[2] This may be probably true but it is equally doubtful whether the reverse could also be true.

Despite the difficulty of visiting the Burma-China borderlands to observe the situation first hand, investigators have interviewed some leading opium operatives in the Shan States who asserted that there were absolutely no opium caravans crossing into the Shan States from China.[3]

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1. Harry J. Anslinger, The Murderers, New York, 1961: 230.
2. ibid.
3. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 146-147.

A British film producer who travelled through the Shan States for five months during 1964-1965 reported in his television documentary that the rebel leaders 'are certain that no Chinese convoys of opium come through their region.'[1]

On the contrary, it was known that General Phao Sriyanonda, then the Director General of Thailand's para-military police, was heavily involved in the narcotics trade with the assistance of the U.S. CIA.[2] It was believed in many quarters that 'The CIA had promoted the Phao-KMT partnership in opium trade in order to provide a secure rear area for the KMT, but this alliance soon became a critical factor in the growth of Southeast Asia's narcotics traffick'.[3] The KMT soldiers sent to Burma, with the support of the CIA, to conduct border raids into China were known to have been heavily involved in narcotics trade in the 1960s before a large number of them - over 4000 troops - were airlifted to Taiwan with the assistance of the U.S. State Department. As General Tuan Shih Wen who commanded the 'Chinese Irregular Forces' (CIF) in the Burmese-Thai border admitted before a British journalist, the late Peter Duval, in an interview in 1966, 'Necessity knows no law. That is why

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1. Adrian Cowell, The Opium Trail (ATV, London, filmed 1964-1965) reel No.1; Interview given by Cowell, London, March 9, 1971.

2. F. Bresler, op. cit.: 69.

3. F. Bresler, op. cit.

we deal with opium. We have to continue to fight the evil of Communism, and to fight you must have an army, and any army must have guns, and to buy guns you must have money. In these mountains, the only money is opium'.[1]

Many of these irregular forces in the Shan States were said to be employed by the CIA to patrol the Burma-China border or to cross into China on long-range intelligence patrols.[2] A CIA agent, William Young, who directed these operations from 1962 to 1967 from a secret base in North-western Laos has stated that he never discovered any evidence that opium was coming out of China. However, his intelligence teams learnt that the Chinese had transformed the patterns of hill tribe agriculture, and opium was no longer a major crop in Yunnan.[3] Most significantly, when Anslinger retired, the Bureau began to change its point of view and in an article in 1970 it concluded that there had been two major postwar upheavals in the international opium trade, one of which was 'the rapid suppression of China's illicit production' in the mid 1950s.[4] Even such admission falls short of the truth. In the 1970s, however, many FBN agents were known to be openly bitter toward Anslinger for what they considered to have been the abuse of the Bureau's name for purposes of blatant,

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1. ibid: 70; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 142-145.

2. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.

3. Interview given by William Young, Chiangmai, Thailand, September 8, 1971, cited in McCoy, op. cit.: 147.

4. The U.S. Bureau of Narcotics, op. cit.

inaccurate propaganda.[1] An FBN agent serving in Southeast Asia recalled in a mid 1971 interview: "Everytime Anslinger spoke anywhere he always said the same thing - 'The Chicoms are flooding the world with dope to corrupt the youth of America'... It was kind of like the 'Marijauna rots your brains' stuff the old FBN put out. It really destroyed our credibility and now nobody believes us. There was no evidence for Anslinger's accusations, but that never stopped him anyway."[2] What Anslinger and the Bureau were doing at the time was of course part of the U.S. foreign policy toward China - part of the cold war rhetorics.

With the retirement of Anslinger, the propaganda was continued by Taiwan officials. In 1971, for instance, one of Taiwan's papers made the following allegation:

> Red China exported some US$800 million worth of narcotics last year. Plantings of poppies are said to be on the increase in Yunnan, whence raw opium moves into the free world via Laos, Burma, and Thailand... Formerly the mainland exported only opium. Recently some 30 processing plants have been established...[3]

These allegations would usually name Burma or Hong Kong as the transit point for narcotics from the People's Republic, but

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1. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.

2. ibid.

3. Free China Weekly, February 14, 1971.

British customs and police officals consulted in Hong Kong by investigators regarded the charges as ridiculous and completely unfounded.[1] In the temper of the time Taiwan's persistent damning accusations against the People's Republic obviously went far beyond mere propaganda, and they were calculated to damage the Republic in the eyes of the international community. Mr. John Warner, chief of the FBN's Strategic Intelligence office in 1971 offered the following explanation:

> Recently we have been getting a number of Congressional inquiries about Chinese Communist involvement in the opium trade. The Taiwanese floated a series of non-attributable articles in the right wing press, quoting statements from British police officers in Hong Kong saying 'we have seized five tons of opiates in Hong Kong this year'. And the article would then state that this came from Red China. Actually it comes from Bangkok. The real object of this sudden mushrooming of this kind of propaganda is to bar China from the U.N.[2]

Most surprisingly, since Red China was admitted to the U.N. and Taiwan kicked out, and the U.S. eventually recognized China, Taiwan has learned to moderate its propaganda against the Republic. It cannot be seriously disputed that the drug traffick in China as well as other varieties of organized crime prior to 1949 would have continued today on the same pattern we find it in many of the Southeast Asian countries if there had been no socialist revolution in the country. The same argument can be made with equal force in the case of Cuba.

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1. See interview with Graham Crookdake previously cited.

2. Interview given by John Warner, Washington, D.C., October 14, 1971, cited in A.W. McCoy, op. cit.

In view of the recent developments in China which capitalists societies hail as a progressive innovation, it is necessary to drop a caveat here as to what impact these developments may have on organized crime in the future. Recently, the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and his associates have begun to encourage what appears to be capitalist-type operations in the country: small individual business are being allowed to operate for profits and family businesses are being revived. Virtually every small restaurant, food stall, noodle shop, cake shop, barber shop or other personal service business has been privatized.[1] It is argued that the aim of Deng's 'revolution' is to 'build prosperity and support modernization'.[2]

In the pursuit of this goal, state enterprises are being reconstituted into companies and told they must make profits and pay taxes; foreign capital is being welcomed, and it is said that 'profit' is no longer considered a bad word.[3] It is said that the government's new policy encourages the establishment of an open market for food produced by farmers working land on a household contract responsibity system to replace the old system of collectivization. Whereas in the past there was one price for goods set by the government, it is now said that there are three- the state price, the price set by enterprises, and that set by market forces.[4] It is too early to assess the impact of these new developments in China. If the lure for profit elsewhere is any guide, it can be argued that sooner or later these developments would open up the pandora's box of organized crime in China once again, as individuals and groups begin to compete with one another for profits.

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1. Gerald Utting, 'Family business revive a nation', The Toronto Star, January 19, 1986: A1, A8.
2. The Toronto Star, January 18, 1986: A10.
3. ibid.
4. G. Utting, op. cit.

Organized Crime in Cuba before the Revolution

Before Castro came to power, Cuba was in all but name a 'colony' of the United States. When all of Spain's American possessions, except Cuba and Puerto Rico, passed out of her control by 1821, the United States became practically sovereign on that continent and Cuba and, indeed, the whole Caribbean came to be claimed as an exclusive American 'sphere of interest'.[1] American domination of Cuba both politically and economically[2] was even better illustrated by the Platt Amendment (drafted by Senator Orville H. Platt 1901) which was attached to the new Constitution of Cuba in June 1901 against Cuban objections.[3] It was only after it was adopted by Cuba that the American army of occupation was withdrawn and Cuba became formally 'independent'. The Amendment required Cuba to sell or lease lands to the U.S. for naval stations, limited Cuban's treaty-making powers and its capacity to contract debts, and gave the U.S. the right to intervene to preserve 'independence' and to maintain law and order.[4]

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1. John Plank (ed.), Cuba and the United States: Long Range Perspectives, Washington, D.C., 1967: 6-7.

2. See generally, Leland H. Jenks, Our Cuban Colony: A Study in Sugar (Studies in American Imperialism), New York, 1928; Robert Scheer and Maurice Zeitlin, Cuba: An American Tragedy, Harmondsworth, 1964; R.E. Bonachea and N.P. Valdes (eds.), Cuba in Revolution, Garden City, New York, 1972.

3. The Platt Amendment was really in the spirit of 'the Monroe Doctrine' enunciated by President James Monroe in 1823. It states that the U.S. would regard as an unfriendly act any attempt by a European nation to interfere in the affairs of the American countries or increase its possessions on the American continent.

4. J. Plank, op. cit.: 12.

As a client nation, organized crime flourished in Cuba on the same scale as in New York or Chicago and it became not only a safe haven for Cuban and American gangsters but an ideal holiday spot for any 'respectable' American wishing to indulge in vices.[1] Under the corrupt regime of President Fulgencio Batista, American and Cuban 'mafia' operated a huge gambling empire in Havana which became the Las Vegas of the Caribbean.[2] Havana also became the prostitution, drug distribution, loansharking and bookmaking capital of the Caribbean. Organized crime was not only welcomed but carefully cultivated in prerevolutionary Cuba, and Havana was probably the most important transit point for Charles Luciano's European heroin shipment to the U.S.[3] The leaders of Luciano's heroin syndicate were believed to be at home in the Cuban capital, and regarded it as a 'safe' city to do business.

On the other hand, Meyer Lansky who managed Luciano's financial empire in Havana after the latter was jailed in 1936, was said to have played a key role in organizing Luciano's heroin syndicate: he supervised smuggling operations, negotiated with Corsican heroin manufacturers, and managed the collection and concealment of the enormous

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1. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 55-56.

2. Hank Messick, The Mobs and the Mafia: The Illustrated History of Organized Crime, London, N.Y., 1972: 5, 174.

3. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 26.

profits.[1] His control over the Caribbean, particularly Havana, and his relationship with the Florida-based Trafficante family were said to be of particular importance, since most of the heroin shipments passed through Cuba or Florida on their way to America's urban markets.[2] For almost twenty years the Luciano-Lansky-Trafficante troika was known to have remained a major feature of the international heroin[3] traffick with Havana as one of the major conduits. Lansky was also reported to have owned most of Havana's casinos,[4] and the Trafficante family to have served as Lansky's resident managers in the Cuban capital. Luciano's 1947 visit to Cuba, following his release from prison in 1936 and deportation to Italy,[5] was believed to have laid the groundwork for Havana's subsequent role in international narcotics-smuggling traffick. As reported by Anslinger, 'Luciano had developed a full-fledged plan which envisioned the Caribbean as his centre of operations... and Cuba was to be made the centre of all international narcotics operations'.[6] However, presssure from the U.S. government

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1. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 25.

2. ibid.

3. ibid.

4. F. Pearce, Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance, London, 1976: 150.

5. M. Pantaleone, op. cit.: 180; G. Servadio, Mafioso: A History of the Mafia from its Origins to the Present Day, New York, 1976: 186.

6. Harry J. Anslinger, The Murderers, op. cit.: 106.

finally resulted in the revocation of his residence visa and his return to Italy, but not, according to Messick, before he had received commitments from organized crime leaders in the U.S. to distribute the regular heroin shipments he promised them from Europe.[1]

The Caribbean on the whole, with Havana as the centre piece, was a happy place for American racketeers, as most governments were friendly to them and did not interfere with the 'business ventures' that brought some badly needed capital into their generally poor countries.[2] It should be noted, however, that organized crime had been well established in Havana long before Luciano's historic voyage. During the period of the U.S. Prohibition, underworld figures realized the potential of the island as a protectorate for their operations. Casinos were built in several parts of Havana with most of the establishments being in operation by 1956. The Havana Post described Cuba as bidding for the title of Las Vegas of Latin America.[3] Numerous government officials were said to be involved in the casino trade, providing protection in return for a share of the profits.[4]

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1. Hank Messick, Lansky, New York, 1971: 137.

2. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 26.

3. Hugh Thomas, Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom, New York, 1971: 873.

4. L. Salas, Social Control and Deviance in Cuba, New York, 1979: 64.

Gambling in Cuba has a long and varied history, and an interesting feature of most of these forms of gambling is that they were institutionalized by the government in power. Cockfighting was one of the earliest forms of gambling introduced around 1740 by the Spanish Crown which established a monopoly over the game, with entrance fees being charged in accordance with the expertise of the animals being used.[1] The lottery which was introduced in Cuba in 1812, with the Spanish Crown maintaining a monopoly over its operation, was said to be 'the only institution of government, popular in the entire island, sanctioned and accepted by all inhabitants'.[2] It became a sort of 'national plague' which cut across all social barriers with some of the major bettors being corporations that purchased large blocks of tickets immediately after they were issued.[3] As the lottery grew it became one of the principal sources of revenue for the Spanish Crown; it also became a major source of corruption.[4] Sellers' licences were awarded to political fuctionaries who collected their percentage of the bets without having to perform any services. The lottery, which provided money for public officials without their performing a service and depended on public officials for supervision, is said to be perhaps the single best example of the institutionalization of public power for private profits.[5] President Batista is

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1. ibid: 62.

2. ibid: 63.

3. ibid.

4. ibid.

5. Jorge I. Dominguez, Cuba: Order and Revolution, Cambridge, Mass., 1978: 37.

reported to have created schemes whereby govenment supporters and potential opponents would be paid from lottery proceeds.[1] The manipulation of lottery revenue thus became a tool for the maintenance not only of office holders and the system itself, but a mechanism for social control. The lottery in effect created an alternative channel for the acquisition of status and wealth.[2]

During the 1930s Meyer Lansky had already 'discovered' the Caribbean for northeastern syndicate bosses and invested their illegal profits in an assortment of lucrative gambling ventures. In 1933 he was reported to have moved into the Miami Beach area and taken over most of the illegal off-track betting and a variety of hotels and casinos.[3] As a result of his financial success in Miami, Lansky then moved into Cuba where profits were even more impressive and where he also purchased the goodwill, friendship, and protection of Batista. Because Cuba was conducive for business and profits from gambling, drugs, and usury incredibly high, Lansky was said to have invested heavily in the casinos and in the heroin traffick from Turkey and France.[4] By the beginning of

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1. ibid.
2. L. Salas, op. cit.: 64.
3. Hank Messick, op. cit.: 87-88.
4. W.J. Chambliss, On the Take, op. cit.: 154.

World War 11 he was reported to have owned the Hotel Nacional's casino as well as leasing the municipal racetrack from a reputable New York bank as a form of diversification.[1] By the early 1950s Santo Trafficante Sr., Lansky's Lieutenant to whom Lansky had delegated much of the responsibility for the daily management of his Havana enterprises, had himself become such an important figure that he in turn delegated his Havana concession to Santo Trafficante, Jr., the most talented of his six sons.[2] As his fathers financial representative, and ultimately Meyer Lansky's, Santo Jr. was reported to have controlled much of Havana's tourist industry and to have become quite close to the Cuban dictator, Fulgencio Batista.[3]

His involvement in narcotics traffick in Havana was said to be only at the level of financing and crisis management, and his organization was reported to be so airtight, and he was so discrect, that federal narcotics agent considered him virtually untouchable.[4] In 1957 when Albert Anastasia wanted to open a competing casino in Havana, Trafficante invited him to a friendly meeting in New York. An hour after Trafficante checked out of his hotel, three gunmen murdered Anastasia in the hotel barbershop.[5] Organized crime in pre-Castro Cuba was indeed in no way different from what prevailed and still prevails in the U.S. today.

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1. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.
2. Hank Messick, op. cit.: 89.
3. Ed. Reid, The Grim Reapers, Chicago, 1969: 90-92.
4. Senate Committee on Government Operations. Organized Crime and Illicit Traffick in Narcotics, 88th Congress, First and Second Sessions, 1964, Part 4: 928.
5. ibid.: Part 2: 524-525; A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 55.

The Situation of Organized Crime in Cuba after 1960.

Cuba, which was a lucrative paradise for American and Cuban organized criminals, underwent a thorough cleansing when Castro and his men came to power in January 1959 through a successful revolution. Once again history stood to repeat itself as in the case of China, with regards to the activities of organized criminals in the country. The tone of the new government left no doubt with the crime syndictes that there would be no place for them under the new Cuba. As one report noted:

> Rumours regarding the abolition of gambling circulated throughout the island during the first days of the new government. Substance was given to these reports as notorious U.S. Racketeers - those who had not yet escaped - were rounded up by rebel troops for questioning.[1]

The revolution which sent corrupt Batista and his friend Lansky packing into the United States also triggered a mass exodus of American and Cuban crime cabals into Miami.[2] Trafficante was reported to have written off his valuable Havana casino operations as a total loss, but this was partially compensated for by his expansion and control over the bolita lottery in Florida, a Cuban numbers game which became enormously lucrative when the refugees started pouring

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1. Hispanic American Report, volume 12, No. I, January 1959.

2. Hank Messick, op. cit.: 5.

into Florida in 1960.[1] The new socialist government began by ridding the country of all forms of prostitution, loan-sharking, racketeering and above all, narcotics trafficking. It should be noted, however, that although the triumph of the revolution caused the immediate flight of the majority of the underworld figures from the island and barred most forms of gambling, cockfighting and casinos were allowed to continue in the first few months of the revolution. Observers believe that the reluctance to move against cockfighting during this period was due to the fact that this sport had a tradition that was ingrained in the history of the people, while in the case of the casinos, they not only served as a source of revenue to the new socialist government in the interim, they also served to keep some possible counterrevolutionaries from other temptations.[2] In many ways, the delay bought time for the revolution to develop by rechanneling potential discontent into harmless actions.

As late as 1960, over six million pesos were reported gambled in the four or five casinos that were still open. In October 1961, the nature of the new government had been defined, and Castro called for the abolition of casinos:

> But why are we going to collect the parasite's money on green felt if the Revolution, through its revenue system, can collect all of these

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1. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 55-56.

2. H. Thomas, Thomas, op. cit.: 344.

> funds plus the parasites themselves. Then don't you think that the existence of these casinos is no longer compatible with the Socialist Revolution.[1]

In 1968, Cuba's own Cultural Revolution took place in the form of the 'economic offensive' which saw the bars closed and all remaining small businesses nationalized. In this atmosphere of socialist puritanism, the existence of a state-run lottery became contradictory and it was formally abolished. It is believed that the abolition of gambling was one of the reasons for the offensive.[2]

It should also be noted that since 1960 Cuba is no longer a factor in the international drug trade. Although Washington has always accused Havana of exporting revolution in Latin America, it has never been able to make such accusations in the case of narcotics.[3] It is difficult to imagine this state of affairs coming about without a socialist revolution. Today, while the rest of the countries in the Caribbean and America (North and South) continue to battle with narcotics problems and other forms of organized crime, Cuba remains the only shining star in a continental sea of darkness, and it further testifies to our contention that organized crime is a phenomenon that is intimately linked to capitalist operation.

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1. Fidel Castro, Obra Revolucionaria 37, October 9, 1961: 18, cited in L. Salas, op. cit.

2. Waldo Medina, 'La loteria y ostros juegos de azar', Bohemia 60, May 3, 1968: 69, cited in L. Salas, op. cit.

3. See, for example, Lester D. Langley (ed.), The U.S., Cuba, and The Cold War: American Failure or Communist Conspiracy?, Lexington, Mass., 1970.

The heroin industry is a mainstay of the political economy of much of the capitalist world and it shall not be eliminated any more readily than the construction industries, banking, or the automobile.[1] The accumulation of capital and profit has always been the driving force in the operation of capitalism. In an effort to make both capital and profit, capitalist entrepreneurs in the course of human history have engaged in morally reprehensible but enormously lucrative enterprises that eventually prove to be 'a bloody instruction that being taught, only returns to plague the inventor'. This was the case with slave trade[2] and opium trade[3] which were motivated by capital accumulation and profit motive. Although Turkish traders were the first people to introduce opium to the rest of the world in their search for exchangeable commodities with China and Southeast Asia, trade in opium, however, remained small and relatively inconsequential. A full-fledged market in opium was not introduced into South Asia until the emergence of capitalism and its attendant search for labour, profits, and market.[4] It is believed that the profits from opium trading were invested in the textile mills in Massachusetts and other New England states, following the introduction of the power loom in 1814, and

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1. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 38.

2. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, Chapel Hill, N. Carolina, 1945, passim.

3. D.E. Owen, op. cit.

4. A. Block and W.J. Chambliss, op. cit.: 20.

that opium helped create a labour force for capitalist expansion in Asia and America, and that the profits from the opium provided the capital for the development of the factory system in New England.[1]

It should be borne in mind that the opium business in Southeast Asia and elsewhere in the twentieth century simply fellows the pattern laid down by the West European capitalist nations and the United States in the last century in Asia.[2] These capitalist Asian countries realize, as we have pointed out before, that opium business is a lucrative source of revenue. Their anti-communist rhetorics and the American CIA's covert support for them to check communist insurgents enabled them for years to carry on this deadly trade with little international furor. It was not until 1960s and 1970s when American cities began to show an alarming number of heroin addicts and a large number of American soldiers in Vietnam were found to be heroin addicts did the U.S. government begin to take concrete steps to halt the opium production in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.[3] Despite these belated efforts by the U.S., opium business will continue to play a significant role in the illicit sector of the economies of capitalist societies, especially in Southeast Asia.

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1. ibid.: 26.

2. A.W. McCoy, op. cit.: 264-293, 315-322.

3. In the 1970s, American policy in Thailand changed dramatically from the cynical, CIA-mounted support for the drug - running ex- KMT Nationalist armies during the late 1960s. In June 1971, President Nixon told the Congress,'Heroin, this deadly poison in the American lifestream, is a foreign export. No serious attack....can ignore the international implications ....nor can domestic efforts succeed without attacking the problem on an international plane'; F. Bresler, op. cit.: 87-88.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the pre- and post-revolutionary phases of China and Cuba with regards to the existence of organized crime in those countries. Before their socialist revolutions, the two countries were a safe haven for organized criminals; in the aftermath of the revolution, however, the basis of their operation was eliminated. In China the Triad syndicates were outlawed thus forcing their exodus from the country into Hong Kong and other southeast Asian countries; opium dens were closed down and officials in the countryside moved effectively to eliminate its cultivation and penalties against drug merchants were ruthlessly enforced. At the same time poppy growers were persuaded to produce other crops. In Cuba, as well, the new Castro regime closed down the casinos and took effective steps to rid the country of other forms of organized crime: prostitution, loan sharking, racketeering and, above all, narcotics trafficking for which Cuba was the staging point into the U.S. The contrast represented by China and Cuba in their post-revolutionary history[1] clearly indicates an abundant and overwhelming evidence that organized crime is a phenomenon that is closely connected with the capitalist

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1. It can be argued that our findings in the case of China and Cuba could be extrapolated with equal justice to include other socialist countries with regards to the state of organized crime (when they were capitalist and in their current phase of socialism).

system of economy where it operates in the illicit sector, and where the profits from the illicit enterprise are shared by organized criminals and their 'respectable' protectors in the power structure, and which in turn help to cement the symbiotic relationship between the two and thus keep the phenomenon thriving on a permanent basis as servant of the power structure.

Furthermore, the case of China and Cuba clearly underlines two other important factors crucial for the existence and operations of organized crime: the willingness of a society to patronize its illicit goods and services, and the protection which it receives from those in authority which enables it to operate. While the absence of these factors in China and Cuba after their socialist revolution effectively spelled the demise of organized crime in those countries, their ever presence in the United States, Sicily, Canada, Hong Kong has served to keep the phenomenon flourishing in those societies. Moreover, as our examination of the crime networks would indicate, the people who run and control organizations that supply the vices in these societies are members of the business, political and law enforcement communities - not simply members of a criminal society. As the case of Seattle and 'Wincanton' in the U.S. makes clear, the gambling, prostitution, drug distribution, and loansharking that flourish in the lower class centres of those cities do so with the compliance, encouragement, and cooperation of the major political and law enforcement officials in the cities. It is known that there exists a symbiotic relationship between the law enforcement political organizations of the cities and a group of local, as distinct from national, men who control the distribution of vices.

Final Summary

Generally speaking, this study also views organized crime, based on our findings, as essentially a form of struggle, and competition in the political economy for wealth and power which is the essence of private enterprise in capitalist societies where the conditions that promote this struggle constitute part of the social system, and where the profits from organized crime help raise the social status of the participants. As the examination of the capitalist and socialist societies would indicate, its flourishing in the former and its demise in the latter would clearly suggest that organized crime, like a particular kind of seed, can thrive only in societies where there are forces that can nurture and sustain its growth.

Political and economic competition, intense horizontal conflicts between individuals and groups, a decentralized, free market economy, and alliance of racketeers and crooked businessmen which are closely tied to the operation of the capitalist system usually provide the right climate for the development and growth of organized crime in this system.[1] Whereas functionalists would argue that the activities of organized crime are functional, this view is only true to the extent that such activities invariably tend to benefit its masters in the power structure but detrimental to the workers who are exploited in the process. Like the system itself in which it thrives, organized crime represents a perfectly

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1. A.R. Lindesmith, 'Organized Crime', Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 217, 1941: 119-127; P. Arlacchi, 'The Mafioso, Frowman of Honour to Entrepreneur' New Left Review, 118, 1979.

rational kind of economic activity,[1] as well as a consensual crime which supplies the illicit goods and services desired by a large minority of the consuming public.[2] The philosophy and values, as Lindesmith has observed, which inform the growth of organized crime are also those that underpin the capitalist system.[3]

Organized crime usually mirrors the tension, insecurity, and inequality in capitalist societies. The tension between the landlords and peasants over the ownership of land in which the Mafia was used to suppress the latter and keep them in their place, the use of organized crime by successive ethnic groups in America to get their share of the country's wealth, the activities of the syndicates in Canada and the Triads in Hong Kong, all illustrate the nature of this tension and struggle. As a result of some countervailing factors in some advanced capitalist societies, not all of them appear to generate organized crime to the same degree. This would account for the difference between the U.S. and West European societies, Italy being an exception, with regards to the existence of organized crime. These countries appear to have more fully developed welfare policies, such as medical care,

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1. W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff (eds.) Whose Law What Order? op. cit.: 201; N.. Morris and G. Hawkins, The Honest Politician's Guide to Crime Control, Chicago, 1969.

2. Ramsey Clark, Crime in America, New York, 1970: 68; D.R Cressey, Theft of The Nation, New York, 1969.

3. A.R. Lindesmith, op. cit.: 120.

better unemployment benefits which often prevent people from reaching the level of dehumanization possible in the United States.[1] These welfare policies contrast with the situation in the U.S. where laissez-faire ideology, puritan individualism, and ethnic and racial pluralism have inhibited the growth of community responsibility for the disadvantaged.[2] In addition, these European societies have more radical working-class traditions, a much higher degree of class consciousness, stronger labour movements, often with Socialist or Communist leadership, than the U.S.[3] As the decline in the mafia power was largely due to the rise of Left-wing organizations in Sicily,[4] a similar decline in the power of the American syndicates would have been a distinct possibility long ago if there had been similar, strong Left-wing organizations in that country. The U.S. is virtually the only advanced capitalist society in the world which does not have a powerful Labour, Socialist, or Communist party representing the working class,[5] and which could bring about a better redistribution of wealth and social amenities.

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1. W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff, op. cit.: 191.

2. D. Wedderbum, 'Facts and Theories of the Welfare State', in M. Mankoff (ed.), The Poverty of Progress: The Political Economy of American Social Problems, New York, 1972: 190-206.

3. W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff, op. cit.: 192; for the American worker's lack of class consciousness, see C.M. Regmus and D.B. McLaughlin (eds), Labour and American Politics, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967: 4.

4. E.J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Manchester, 1959: 44-49.

5. W.J. Chambliss and M. Mankoff, op. cit.

Furthermore, the easy collusion and symbiotic accommodation between the syndicates on the one hand and politicians, police and union leaders on the other which are a permanent feature of organized crime in the United States are not so readily evident in the west European capitalist societies, with the exception of Italy. In the absence of this working relationship in which organized crime plays the role of a servant, neither the mafia nor the Triad and American syndicates can exist let alone exercise any influence in their respective societies on a permanent basis. Thus it can be argued that organized crime cannot exist without the collaboration and collusion of the established power structure. The nature of organized crime in the societies we have investigated should be distinguished from the general corruption by individuals which takes place in <u>every</u> society, whether socialist or capitalist. Such an act usually has neither police nor political protection and is quickly brought to an end as soon as the culprit is discovered and punished. The type of the phenomenon we have investigated has both management and coordination; has almost an institutional character extending over decades or even centuries; is protected from the law through collusion and accommodation with the established authorities, and it constitutes part of the operation of the political economy. The protective shield which organized crime has enjoyed at the hands of the established power structure in capitalist societies has enabled it to survive a series of committee and commissions of enquiry investigating its activities. It is in this regard

that some writers speak of the phenomenon in terms of its permanency of form, its invisibility', its 'eternal life', and 'institutional longevity extending far beyond the natural life span of its more mortal leadership'.

As a human activity which is underpinned by man's competition and greed for wealth and power, it can be argued that organized crime does not possess any of these attributes which some writers ascribe to it. Rather the appearance of these characteristies of organized crime should be attributed to the long and unbroken chain of support, collusion and alliance which successive generations of politicians, law enforcers, labour leaders and businessmen in capitalist societies have maintained with organized crime operatives with whom they share the profits of their enterprises in return for protection. As the case of China and Cuba would indicate, whenever and wherever this alliance is broken or removed organized crime would cease to exist. More importantly, the operation of the capitalist system itself which encourages human greed, unbridled competition, and conspicuous consumptions usually plays into the hands of this alliance.

In the nature of the phenomenon, any public policy designed to eliminate/control organized crime which does not address itself first to this symbiotic relationship is not likely to succeed. This has been demonstrated by the failure of the recommendations of the anti-mafia commissions in Italy and similar those recommendation of the crime committees in the U.S. and Hong Kong. In the final analysis, the complete elimination of organized crime will of necessity require a radical rearrangement and transformation, as it has been done in China and Cuba, of the political and economic structures in the society in which organized crime flourishes.

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